

## **DR. HURLBURT'S PRESCRIPTION.**

**BY ELIZABETH BIGELOW.**

"It's of no use to talk about my being your wife, Charley. Your father never will consent, and mother will never even let me see you—if she can help it—without his consent. No, you mustn't come a step further!" And pretty Rose Carter drew her arm out of Charley Hurlburt's very decidedly, when they reached the end of the village common. "You know it almost breaks my heart to say it, Charley, but I don't think I can ever meet you so again. Mother will be sure to find it out, and it would vex her so. And she has had enough trouble without my giving her any—poor mamma!"

Handsome Charley Hurlburt shrugged his shoulders impatiently.

"Your mother comes before me, of course! It is no matter how I feel. You say coolly that you can never meet me again; that means, I suppose, that we are never to see each other again."

"Why, no, Charley, if you will only have patience to wait! Everything may come out right."

"Wait! You have been telling me to wait

for the last two years, and things are no nearer to coming out right than they ever were."

"I can't think why your father should dislike my mother so. I think mother knows, but she never will tell me. Miss Esther Wagg says that they were lovers once, and had a quarrel that your father can never forget. But one can't believe all Miss Esther's gossip."

"I don't think it is anything more than a notion he has got into his head. He's a crochety, set old fellow, but he's got a good big heart, Rose, if one can only get at it. If you were only my wife, he would be sure to come round and think the world of you. If you only would marry me, Rose! At the worst—if he wouldn't come round—he could only disinherit me, and I have a pair of good strong arms, and some passable brains to fight my way—our way—through the world."

The moonlight showed him her face, and he fancied that there was a little shadow of hesitation on it. But she shook her head firmly after a moment.

"Now, Rose, darling, don't tell me again to wait—"

The rest of the sentence was never spoken, for a heavy hand was laid on the young man's shoulder, and an angry voice mimicked his tender tones.

"Rose, darling! I'll teach you to 'darling' her, young man!"

And there was Dr. Hurlburt's face, red with anger, looking over Charley's shoulder. Rose, at the first glimpse of it, turned and ran, like a little coward as she was.

"Haven't I forbidden your seeing that young woman? What do you mean by sneaking round here with her, like a thief in the night?" pursued the doctor, furiously.

"It is not my fault that I do not walk with her openly; it is not my fault that she is not my wife. It is only because she will not consent to be so," answered Charley stoutly.

"Wont consent to be your wife, eh? It doesn't seem to me that she treats you exactly like a rejected lover!" sneered the doctor.

"She would marry me, if she were allowed to choose," answered Charley, trying hard to keep his temper. "Her mother will not consent."

"Humph! not consent? that's pretty well!" growled the doctor. "So she thinks my son is not good enough for her daughter?"

"She does not object to me. If you would give your consent to our marriage, she would give hers."

"Ah, that's it! Well, my consent you'll never have, young man, you may rely upon that. And if ever I hear of your being seen with that young woman again, I'll turn you out of doors, sir. Not a penny of my money shall you ever have, sir. Remember that! I am not one to make idle threats."

Charley was about to reply, but they had reached the house by this time, and the doctor went into the office, and shut the door behind him with a bang. So there was nothing for poor Charley to do but to take his way disconsolately up stairs to bed.

In the meantime, the doctor seized the poker and stirred up the dying fire in his grate savagely.

"Wont consent, eh? That's like Rose Shepard! she always was a proud piece. Let me catch that boy with her daughter again!" And he walked rapidly up and down the room, brandishing the poker, and with a scowl still on his face, looking not un-

like a midnight assassin, in spite of the venerable aspect which his gray hairs gave him.

But he cooled down very soon, sufficiently to carry the poker back to its place, and begin a search for dressing-gown and slippers, a search which proved long, and served to turn his anger from Charley to another.

"Of all the miserable housekeepers that ever I had, this Barnes woman is the worst!" he grumbled, jerking himself at last into the dilapidated, comfortless looking dressing-gown, and slippers trodden down at the heel.

"Not a drop of warm water, or anything to eat in the house, I'll warrant!" And he strode into the dining-room, which indeed was cold and void of cheer.

He went into the pantry and munched a hard very dark-colored doughnut savagely.

"I'd turn her away to-morrow, she and her husband, too, only that the next one would be sure to be worse. They are all about of a piece. There is nothing worse to have in the house than a housekeeper—unless it's a wife. And I don't know—"

Doctor Hurlburt still stood in the pantry, solemnly deliberating, after the last morsel of doughnut had disappeared. It was so long since he had a wife that he could not decide whether one was worse than a housekeeper or not. It was a question that he had been revolving in his mind for years, without coming to any definite conclusion.

"'Better bear the ills we have, than fly to others that we know not of,' the poet says. But then, a man can't bear this state of things long; he might as well live in a cave in the woods! No order, no comfort, none of the decencies of living. Some time or other I shall have to marry, and I might as well make up my mind to it at once. And there's the widow Zilpha Thomas. (Strange that boy can be such a fool as to run after that little jade of a Rose Carter!) The Widow Thomas is a good housekeeper, I have no doubt; house always looks as neat as wax. Then there's that wood lot of hers that joins mine; not that I'm looking out for property with a wife, but that lot would come very handy; and the widow is a fine woman; a little quick tempered, I'm afraid. I never did like those snapping black eyes; that girl, Rose Carter, is just her mother over again, with her blue eyes and her wheedling ways—confounded little jilt! and that boy is fool enough to be taken in by her. I should like to see anybody take me in! No, I thank you! once is enough. I said to Miss Esther Wagg,

the other day, 'The widow Zilpha Thomas is a fine woman; a capital manager, isn't she?'"

"Manager! you may be sure of that. She managed poor Reuben Thomas into his grave," said Miss Esther.

"But then, it is of no consequence what these spiteful old maids say. Most likely she has an eye on the situation for herself!"

And the doctor drew himself up, in the proud assurance that when he did take a second helpmeet, he should leave every marriageable lady of his acquaintance inconsolable.

"I'll drive round and see the Widow Thomas next week. I don't think it likely that she could manage me!"

And having made up his mind, Doctor Hurlburt betook himself to his chamber. But his face was not that of a man who is quite satisfied with his decision; and he stood for a long time at the window, and looked down to the foot of the hill, where the Widow Carter's house was plainly visible in the moonlight.

"No, no! once is enough for a man to be made a fool of! And that silly boy shall never marry her daughter, if I can help it!" he said, at last, turning away with a decided shake of the head. From which signs an observer would have supposed Miss Esther Wagg to be right, and the Widow Carter an old sweetheart who had "made a fool of him."

Rose Carter, with pale cheeks and downcast eyes, sat demurely sewing beside her mother the next morning, when her uncle, old Squire Carter, came in. The pale cheeks had been observed but not commented on by her mother, but the squire was not so delicate.

"Bless me! what has become of the red cheeks? Why, they are as white as snow-balls! Too much sewing and moping, and not enough air and exercise—or has its sweetheart deserted it, poor little Rosy?"

Upon which Rose's cheeks grew scarlet, of course. But the squire was not satisfied.

"The child looks really ill, and something must be done," he said to Mrs. Carter, as he went away. "She hasn't looked like herself for months."

And the squire, haunted by Rose's pale face, betook himself directly to Doctor Hurlburt's office.

"I want you to go and see my niece, little Rose Carter, or prescribe something for her. She says nothing ails her, but she looks pale and moped. I suppose it is nothing but

want of exercise; if these girls would only do as their grandmothers did! But you know what will help her—its nerves, I suppose," said the squire, who fancied that "nerves" were at the bottom of all feminine ailments.

"Ah yes! I'll send her a prescription," said the doctor, heartily. And thinking it the heartiness of interest and good-nature, the squire went on his way relieved.

And Doctor Hurlburt, feeling even less amiable than on the previous night, sat down at his desk, and wrote a prescription for Miss Rose Carter.

Just as he finished it his man Barnes brought him a note. It was from the man who took care of the doctor's farm on the outskirts of the town, near the Widow Thomas's wood lot.

"The Widow Thomas's man Jake wants to know if you will let the widow take Black Bess, to go down to Saugus to the quarterly conference meeting to-night. She told him to say particular that she didn't feel very well, and thought the ride would do her good, if you would be so kind as to let her take Black Bess, which is so gentle."

"SAMUEL HODGKINS."

The doctor's face cleared as he read.

"Little Sam Hodgkins is waiting for the answer, if you please, sir," said Barnes.

And the doctor wrote a few words hurriedly, in answer to Samuel Hodgkins, not without grumbling at the man's stupidity in not letting the widow have the horse without applying to him. But no matter! the widow would not have to ask for Black Bess again. "With all my worldly goods I thee endow," he meant to say to her very soon.

Barnes was entrusted with the two notes—one for Miss Rose Carter, and the other for little Sam Hodgkins to carry to his father.

In the meantime, Charley had come to a new resolve. He would see Mrs. Carter once more, and try to gain her consent to his marriage with Rose. Without her consent, Rose would never be his wife. It was evidently a hopeless task to try to overcome his father's prejudices; but he was determined that they should not be allowed to destroy his happiness, and Rose's, too, for life. Mrs. Carter liked him; she would give Rose to him willingly, she had told him, if it were not for his father's objections; she might be persuaded to, in spite of it.

And there was no time to lose, for in two days he was going away to a distant city, to establish himself in business. He had hoped to carry Rose with him, but all his pleading

had been of no avail to induce her to marry him against her mother's will. All his hope now lay in influencing Mrs. Carter. So, early that morning he took his way to the cottage at the foot of the hill. Squire Carter had just left, and Mrs. Carter's mind was still filled with the anxiety regarding Rose's health which he had aroused; so perhaps Charley could not have found a better time for trying to win her over to his side.

But, though she did hesitate for a moment, his pleading was in vain.

"You know there is no one whom I would rather have for a son than you, Charley," she said. "But I know your father. He is a stern man, a very stern man, and he will never relent. He would never forgive you for marrying against his will. I cannot consent to your ruining all your prospects in life. You and Rose are both very young; you may change. The time might come, Charley, when you would regret disobeying your father's wish. You are his only son, and so dear to him; and before this, you say, he has never thwarted your slightest wish. You ought not to disobey him hastily. To be sure, his prejudice seems unreasonable—"

"Unreasonable! It is absurd!" interrupted Charley, hotly. "Why, he has never so much as seen you, to my knowledge!"

Mrs. Carter's cheek flushed faintly.

"I lived here when I was a girl, you know. I knew your father then. He has some reasons for disliking me which I don't understand."

"It is only a prejudice, a notion, I am sure," said Charley. "And he has no right to dictate to me in such a matter."

And he was beginning his eager pleading over again, when Barnes appeared with the note. There was no address on the outside, and Mrs. Carter opened it, while Charley waited in a fever of suspense to know what his father could have to say to Mrs. Carter.

Her face was a picture of amazement as she read, but pleasure shone through it as she handed the note to Charley.

It was brief and to the point.

"Let him have her."

"EDWARD H. HURLBURT."

"I always told Rose he had a heart if one could only get at it!" cried Charley, in a transport of delight. "Now, you can make no objection; we have your promise! And I am going away the day after to-morrow, you know, and I must take my wife with me."

"The day after to-morrow! My dear boy, you are beside yourself!" exclaimed Mrs. Carter.

"You and Rose have said wait to me for so long, that you can't have the heart to say it longer, now that there is no reason for waiting. I shall coax Rose over to my side, and then you can't refuse."

And he did coax them both over to his side, after countless arguments and objections. It was arranged that there should be a very quiet wedding, to which only a few intimate friends were to be invited, the next evening. Then Charley hurried home to express his gratitude to his father, whom he began to think he had misjudged.

While this scene was transpiring at the cottage, Samuel Hodgkins had received Doctor Hurlburt's answer to his note, and being somewhat surprised and puzzled by it, had transmitted it directly to the Widow Thomas; thus relieving himself of all responsibility in the matter.

So the widow, who was adorning her best cap with new cherry ribbons, in anticipation of the doctor's taking her gentle hint and coming himself to drive her to the quarterly conference meeting, was called from that pleasing occupation to read the following note, a mere scrawl, written evidently in haste and irritation:

"Let her take a dessert-spoonful of extract of valerian, night and morning for her nerves, common sense in as large doses as she can get it, and stop gadding about evenings."

"EDWARD H. HURLBURT."

The widow's black eyes snapped so that the doctor, if he had been there to see, would have liked them less than ever, and the roses that had deserted her cheeks, she thought forever, reappeared in full bloom. She had been angry often in her life—the departed Reuben had not been very easy to manage—but never before had she felt anything like the wrath she felt at that moment.

"The impertinent old scoundrel! 'Gadding about evenings' indeed! 'Valerian for my nerves' as if I were some fidgety old maid! 'Common sense in as large doses as I can find.' How dare he write such a note! Well, I have had a lucky escape! Stupid, cross-grained old wretch! a life of it I should have had with him!"

And the widow put on the cherry-ribboned cap upside down, and fell to dusting the portrait of her deceased spouse with a vim. With

all his faults Renben was not the worst man that ever lived!

Charley was obliged to repress his gratitude for a while, for when he reached home he found that his father had gone to a neighboring town to attend a medical convention, and would not return until the following day.

When the doctor returned the next afternoon Charley was absent, busied with preparations for the approaching wedding. Dr. Hurlburt, finding a leisure afternoon upon his hands made an unusually careful toilet, and drove out to call upon the Widow Thomas.

He had fully made up his mind that it would be a lesser evil to have the Widow Zilpha Thomas for a wife, than Mrs. Barnes for a housekeeper, but he had not the air of a very eager wooer, and, in truth, he was not without his misgivings; he saw in imagination the widow's black eyes snapping defiantly at him, and wondered if he should not repent, if she proved to be of a quarrelsome temper.

And he cast two or three glances back at the Widow Carter's cottage, and as he did so he certainly sighed. The widow had been in the window, and she had bowed to him—bowed, and actually smiled a little, though in a shy sad way. Dr. Hurlburt did not quite understand it. He had met her but twice, to be sure, since she had come back to the village, two years before, but at neither of those times had she shown any disposition to recognize him. His looks had not invited a recognition either then or now, but here she was as sweet as a May morning! It was all her artfulness, of course! She thought she could cajole him into letting Charley marry her daughter. She would see! He would send that boy to Europe, to China if need be, to get him out of Rose Carter's way.

Still it is certain that he sighed deeply as he passed the cottage, and the Widow Thomas's black eyes snapped before him all the more ominously in contrast with the Widow Carter's soft shy blue ones.

Was Miss Esther Wagg right, and was it possible that there was still a spring of sentiment in the doctor's heart, which fifty years and his crusty temper had not been able wholly to dry?

From afar off the Widow Thomas saw him coming, "riding along with that grand careless air, as if he owned the whole town," as she declared, and prepared to do battle. She

was in such a quiver of indignation that her cap-ribbons stood up straight, and the snapping eyes of his imagination were as nothing compared with these!

"How dare you come here, you insulting, hypocritical villain! you perfidious wretch! Leave this house, sir, and if ever you come here again I'll set Towser upon you as sure as you live!" she screamed.

To say that the doctor was amazed would but feebly express his emotion. He was thoroughly alarmed, and lost no time in escaping from the presence of the maniac (as he felt sure she must be), to his carriage.

"Insane from an evil temper! ah, I knew those eyes were not for nothing! But why her anger should be directed against me I can't understand; though I suppose her wrath falls upon any one who happens to be near when the fit seizes her. O, what an escape I have had!"

And Dr. Hurlburt took his homeward way, resolved to be contented with a housekeeper, and thankful that his lot was no worse.

Barnes met him with an unusually smiling countenance.

"Mr. Charley's been wanting to see you, sir; he waited a while, but of course he couldn't wait any longer, and it's six o'clock this minute. He told me to tell you how thankful and happy he was, and that he should feel awful bad if you didn't come to the wedding."

"Thankful and happy!" "Come to the wedding!" What are you talking about, you idiot?" demanded the doctor.

"To his wedding with Miss Rose Carter. I thought of course you knew. It's at half past eight."

"The young rascal! Does he dare to do this?" shouted the doctor, and rushed out of the house, and down to the Widow Carter's cottage. Mrs. Carter and Charley met him in the hall. His wrath had had time to cool a little in his walk, and if it had not he would have found it hard to be so demonstrative as usual under the widow's calm clear eyes. But he expressed his disapproval quite strongly enough to show them that there had been some mistake.

Charley produced the note, and the doctor saw through the mystery at once—Mrs. Thomas's lunacy and all. That stupid Barnes had changed the notes. The Widow Thomas had been advised to stop gadding about of evenings, and Mrs. Carter had considered herself permitted to "let him have" her

daughter! However angry he might be, the doctor saw that it was too late to interfere.

"Well, young man, you have chosen your way, and you must walk in it! She's her mother over again, they say—you had better marry her as soon as possible or she'll jilt you, as her mother did me!"

The Widow Carter looked at him with something like a flash in her eyes.

"How can you say that, when you know it was you who deserted me?" she said.

"Didn't you write me a letter within a month of the day that was to have been our wedding-day, telling me, coolly, that you had discovered that you preferred another?" demanded the doctor.

"Never! I never wrote you such a letter!" said the widow. Charley began to see that an explanation was coming, at which a third

party would be *de trop*, and took his departure. If he did, then, have a faint presentiment of what might happen as a result of that explanation, at some future day, he was not at all prepared for what did occur, that very night.

When he and Rose moved away from before the minister who had made them husband and wife, his father and Mrs. Carter stood up before him, and the ceremony was repeated for their benefit! They had decided, in that brief space of time, that that was the best reparation possible for the mistake of almost a lifetime.

And it proved so agreeable an arrangement that Dr. Hurlburt is often heard to say that, though he has always prospered in his practice, he never made so great a success as when he wrote a prescription for Rose Carter.

## DR. BROWN'S SURPRISE PARTY.

BY FRANK H. ANGIER.

"DEACON TARBOX, I'm a virtuous woman, and I've tried to be a good and Christian wife, and for me to be treated in this way, I declare it's a burnin' shame!"

The speaker was Mrs. Jerusha, the wife of Dr. Amadeus Brown, and the scene was the library of the deacon's house in the village of Oak Hollow. Mrs. Brown had worked herself into quite a heat of scarlet excitement, and the deacon sat in his armchair, looking at her with a troubled expression through his gold-bowed spectacles.

"So 'tis; so 'tis," said the deacon, "ef your suspicions are correct. You say that your husband visits the parson's wife every day?"

"Every individual day for the last three weeks. Don't I know it? Haven't I watched him? I've stood it jest as long as I kin, and now I'm goin' to speak out. I'll have a divorce, that I will. Let him run away with that little pink and white doll-baby if he wants to. He'll find out one of these days who kin cook his vittles best, and mend his clothes, and take care on him. Ef he'd rather have her do it, he's welcome to try her. It—it aint that—that I care—hare—hare—r—r—r."

Mrs. Brown, having restrained her feelings as long as was possible, at this juncture burst into a flood of tears, and became incoherent.

"You say," observed the deacon, when she

had somewhat recovered her self-possession again, "you say that your husband only visits the parson's house when that gentleman is absent?"

"Well, he takes those times generally. You know the parson is away this week to Conference. Now, you wont believe it, mebbe, but the doctor has been in that house just six times since the parson went off. It's no more'n I expected. I knew just how it would be ef Parson Gray went an' married a young wife and brought her here. But I did *not* believe,"—and here Mrs. Brown brought her hand down on her lap with great emphasis—"I did *not* believe my husband would be the fust one to fall in love with her."

"It is greatly to be regretted that Mister Gray didn't choose some older person," said the deacon, gravely. "His wife is too young for a parson's wife, and too pooty."

"Pooty!" exclaimed Mrs. Jerusha, firing up. "Well, that's a matter of opinion. I don't admire her style myself."

"This is a very serious matter," said Deacon Tarbox, with great solemnity. "This must be brought at once afore the selectmen of the parish—that is, supposin', of course, ma'am, that you ken prove what you say."

"Prove it!" replied Mrs. Brown, violently. "I ken prove it fast enough. Didn't the

doctor order the parson to send his wife to the city for a change of air, as he said, and when that poor unsuspectin' man went an' done it, didn't my husband post right off after her, under pretence of havin' business there? O, don't I know it? He little thought as how the eye of his wronged and outraged wife was upon him. Then, no sooner does she come back than Doctor Brown begins his visits to the cottage agin. He says she's sick, and Parson Gray is fool enough to believe it."

"It must be looked into," said Deacon Tarbox. "I promise you, Mrs. Brown, you shall hev justice done to you. Now, I'll jest step over'n consult Elder Pilberry. He's a clear headed man, the elder is, and we'll do whatever he thinks best about it. Dear, dear! Why can't folks obey the Scriptures and leave other people's wives alone?"

Mrs. Brown began to cry again.

"Now you jest go home an' never mind anything more about it," said the deacon. "The elder an' I will come to some conclusion. It'll be a dreadful blow to the parson, though, poor man. But then we must do our dooty, Mrs. Brown."

Mrs. Jerusha dried her eyes and took her leave, while Deacon Tarbox, full of a solemn sense of responsibility for the secret confided to him, went in search of Elder Pilberry. He found that worthy in his backyard, in his shirt sleeves, sawing wood, and at once laid the matter before him.

"Wall," said the elder, standing with one foot on his sawhorse and resting his elbow reflectively on his knee, "my opinion is jest this: We must work slow, ye know. Missis Brown is naterally a kinder jealous little woman, an' she may be mistaken in some of her facks. Now we can't git along without facks to steer by. Doctor Brown may be visitin' the parson's wife with the most honorable intentions, an' the parson may know all about it when Missis Brown don't. It wont do to stir this thing up, you know, deacon, till we git more facks."

"Yaas, that's so, Brother Pilberry," replied the deacon; "but how kin we do it? There aint no doubt about Doctor Brown's bein' down to the parsonage most every night sence Parson Gray went away. Then, ye know, he follered her down to the city, too. That ere don't look right, elder, how does it?"

"No, it don't," said Mr. Pilberry, "but 'taint best to take things for granted. As

you say, the parson's wife is young'n pooty, and 'taint sing'lar the doctor should be kinder took with her; but then Doctor Brown is a married man, an' a member in good standin', so I guess we'd better make sure of our facks fust. Now wouldn't it be a good idee for you an' I to kinder hang-round down by the parsonage to-night, and see what's goin' on? Ef we could git a look in through the winders, ye know, we might be able to tell what the doctor goes there for."

"That idee never struck me," said Deacon Tarbox, in a convinced tone of voice, implying that it had struck him now, and that he was very forcibly impressed by it. "That's a good suggestion."

"Wall," continued the elder, "you jest come over here along about eight o'clock, an' we'll walk down that way."

"How about the parson's dog?" asked the deacon, a little nervously.

"O, he don't do nothin' but bark, an' besides, he's chained up. I guess 'taint best to say anything to Missis Brown. Shouldn't like to hev it known how we git our information, ye know."

The deacon nodded, and the elder returned to his wood-sawing, each of them gloating with an inward satisfaction over the choice bit of scandal of which they had suddenly become possessed, and never for a moment doubting that it was their sacred duty, as godly men and pillars of the church, to stir it up and make the most of it.

That night Elder Pilberry and Deacon Tarbox might have been found snugly ensconced behind the hedge fence which separated the parson's south meadow from his backdoor yard. The deacon had risen from his seat on the damp grass for the twentieth time, remarking that he should "ketch his death a' cold ef he staid there any longer," and that he didn't believe the doctor would come that night, anyhow, when the elder, looking through the branches of the hedge, suddenly exclaimed:

"There he is! Duck your head, deacon!"

The doctor fastened his horse to the tying-post, and knocking briskly at the door of the parsonage, passed a few words with the person who opened it, and entered, closing the door behind him.

"Back door?" muttered the elder. "That's suspicious."

"Where's that light?" asked the deacon. "Aint that in Missis Gray's room?"

"Yes," said the elder, "that corner room



in the second story is Missis Gray's chamber, an' there's somethin' goin' on there, too. Jest see them shadders."

The curtains of the room were not drawn, and the two eavesdroppers, looking upward at the windows, could plainly see the ceiling and a small segment of the opposite wall. Upon this portion of the plastering was cast a singular complication of moving shadows, giving apparent evidence of there being several persons in the room. Who they were, or what they were doing, the elder and his companion, not being favored with a view of the whole apartment, were unable to determine.

"Hi!" exclaimed the deacon, after vainly stretching his neck for several moments. "That's the doctor's figger!"

And so it was. As the deacon spoke a person advanced to the window for an instant, and then quickly turned away. But in that instant both of the watchers below had recognized the familiar outlines of Doctor Amadeus Brown.

"Wall," exclaimed Elder Pilberry, rising to an erect position, "I never would hev believed it to my dyin' day ef I hadn't seen it with my own eyes!"

"In Missis Gray's own chamber!" said the deacon. "And her husband away. This is a subjec' for a vestry meetin', elder."

"We must find out about this," observed Pilberry. "Ef it goes afore the selectmen we must hev facks. I calculate it's our moral dooty, Deacon Tarbox, to see what's goin' on in that there chamber."

"How kin it be done?" asked the deacon. "'Twont do to go bustin' the door open, an' if we ring the bell he'll take the alarm."

"We kin do better than that," replied the elder. "There's a rain-water barrel at the corner of the house, right by the settin'-room winder. Now, ef we kin git another barrel to put on top of it, we kin git up to the second story easy."

The deacon approving of this idea, they searched cautiously through the parson's woodshed and succeeded in finding a headless barrel, which they duly placed on the top of the water-butts at the corner of the parsonage. On the barrel the elder balanced a board, and mounting this unsubstantial structure with the deacon's assistance, he succeeded in gaining a good view of the sitting-room on the first floor, but found himself considerably below the window-sill of the upper chamber. The lower room was

quite empty, but a lamp was dimly burning on the centre-table.

"Kin you see?" whispered the deacon, in a voice which might have been heard for a hundred yards.

"No," returned Elder Pilberry, "not high enough."

"Hey?"

"Not high enough."

"Will the choppin'-block do?" asked the deacon, with a gesture towards the wood-pile.

"Yes, hand it up."

It was rather heavy, but the deacon succeeded with some difficulty in bringing it to the water-butts and passing it up to the elder. The latter placed it firmly in the centre of the board, and mounted it carefully, holding on to the spouting to steady himself. With the aid of this last addition to his pedestal, Mr. Pilberry now found the rim of his hat about on a level with the lower panes of Mrs. Gray's windows. Letting go the spout, he raised himself on his tiptoes and prepared to take a leisurely survey of the apartment; but at this critical juncture the parson's dog, which was chained in the barn, suddenly became suspicious that something was going wrong, and forthwith set up such a terrific howling and barking that the deacon was frightened nearly out of his wits. This sudden loss of his presence of mind on the part of Deacon Tarbox was fatal to the success of the Elder Pilberry's observations, for the former fell in consternation against the water-butts with such force as to upset his companion's equilibrium, and to cause the overthrow of barrel, board and chopping-block together, thereby precipitating Mr. Pilberry through the sitting-room window with most astonishing velocity, and landing him on the floor with a crash of broken glass which might have been heard for half a mile.

It was fully two minutes before the elder sufficiently recovered himself to realize what had happened. His first impression was that there had been an earthquake, but this idea gradually resolved itself into the conviction that the day of judgment had arrived. He seemed surrounded by a blaze of fireworks, and he only awoke from the influence of this optical illusion to find himself held fast in the bony clutches of an infuriated female, who was rapidly removing his hair in handfuls, apparently with the idea of obtaining enough to fill a mattress.

"I say!" shouted the elder. "Confound it! Git out! Let me go, will you?"

"Let you go!" screamed the woman, shrieking at the top of her voice, and shaking him violently by the collar. "No I won't. Come on! I've got him! Fire! Murder! Robbers! I've got him!"

"Do you—you know—who—I—I—I am?" exclaimed Mr. Pilberry, his remark rendered somewhat disjointed as a result of his antagonist's shaking.

"No, nor I don't care who you are!" shouted the woman. "Murder! mur—"

A violent tussle ensued, the elder using his most desperate endeavors to escape, and the enemy hanging to him with the tenacity of a bull-terrier, the only appreciable result being the removal of the greater portion of the clothing of both combatants. In the midst of the melee the door burst suddenly open, and Doctor Amadeus Brown entered in a state of great excitement.

"For Heaven's sake," he exclaimed, "what is the matter? Elder Pilberry! Nancy! Let go that gentleman at once. Do you know who he is?"

"No," said Nancy; "who is he?"

"He's—why, bless my soul!—he's an elder of the church."

"He's an elder of the church?" exclaimed Nancy, drawing off and looking at the dilapidated Pilberry contemptuously. "And so elders in the church come round smashin' the minister's winders in this 'ere way?"

By this time the deacon had gained admittance by some means, and he now appeared upon the scene, with his eyes fixed upon the doctor solemnly. He was determined that the elder's unfortunate plight should not deter him from his righteous purpose.

"Doctor Brown," he exclaimed, slowly, "how cum you in this house?"

"Well, gentlemen," said the doctor, "I will answer that question by asking another. Pray how came you here?"

The deacon might have replied that it was very evident how Mr. Pilberry got there, and that as for himself, he came in through the back kitchen—but that would hardly have comported with the dignity of his errand.

"We came," he said, "in pursuance of our dooty as selectmen of this village. It is a painful dooty, but we must do it. You hev been seen, Doctor Brown, in the chamber of Missis Gray, in the absence of her husband."

Nancy here burst out into a loud laugh, and the doctor smiled.

"Yes," he said, "I don't deny it."

"Elder Pilberry," exclaimed the deacon, "you hear that? He don't deny it. Now, Doctor Brown, perhaps you hev some explanation to make—some excuse to offer. We are ready to hear what you hev to say."

"Well, gentlemen," replied the doctor, looking from one to the other, and making a great effort to restrain a strong inclination to laugh, "perhaps you will not deem any excuse necessary when I tell you that our respected pastor has this night become a happy father. It was a little premature perhaps, gentlemen, and the parson would undoubtedly have remained at home had he supposed the event likely to occur so soon; but it is a fine boy, gentlemen, and weighs eight pounds and a half."

Deacon Tarbox and Elder Pilberry hung their heads and looked foolish. Stammering out a confused apology, they hurriedly took their leave, both sadder and wiser men. The experience was not without its results, for from it the elder derived a very excellent motto, which he never afterwards failed to fire at the deacon on all favorable occasions: "Never jump at conclusions without fust bein' sure of your facts."

## ELLINOR'S FORTUNE.

BY MARY HELEN BOODEY.

SITUATED in one of the wildest spots to be found along the seacoast of England, where the furious waves often beat with thundering reverberation upon the cliffs, and dashed their spray against the cottage windows, the little fishing hamlet of N— possessed no claims to beauty of any sort, but attracted solely by the weird wildness of its surroundings. The houses were mostly clustered together, as if for mutual protection, and were nearly all of the poorest sort, only a few having the least pretensions to anything like ornament. The occupants were a rough but kindly people—the men hardy and brave, inured to danger by everyday experience, the women warm-hearted, but coarse and uneducated, as might be expected. The children of such parents were like them, and their noisy sports were seldom interrupted.

A little apart from the rest of the village, and in a spot even more exposed to the sea,

stood a dwelling rather better than the others, more thoroughly and neatly built, as if the one who erected it had possessed a mind above his companions, and had manifested it, perhaps unconsciously, in this way. In truth, the builder, Malcolm Keith, had ever been a mystery to the simple folks around him, who felt instinctively that he was of a different order from themselves. He had come to N—, no one knew whence, accompanied by his little daughter, a beautiful child of four summers, and a middle-aged woman who appeared to take the place of foster-mother to the child. In his house was what seemed to his unlearned neighbors a wonderful library; and, as Elinor Keith grew up, she was instructed by her father in all the branches of ordinary education, as well as in some others generally considered too abstruse for the feminine intellect. This singular man was finely educated, and

taught his daughter to play with skillful and artistic hand upon the piano and guitar, which she accompanied with a voice of wonderful power, sweetness and expression.

Life on that dreary seacoast was very monotonous, but Elinor, or Nelly, as she was always called, knew no other, and was contented in the society of her father and "Aunt Katy," the elderly and affectionate nurse, who held no object on earth so dear as her beloved foster-child.

But this state of affairs could not always last. There came a time when Malcolm Keith could no longer take long walks with Nelly along the coast and share all her innocent pleasures. The hand of death was laid upon his brow, and it quickly grew cold beneath its icy pressure. In vain Nelly wept until she could weep no more, and passed into a state of hopeless, tearless misery yet more appalling than her first wild burst of grief had been; the closed eyes of her father would not open at her bidding, nor his voice answer her own, let her speak never so entreatingly. At last nature was merciful, and she forgot her awful sorrow in the unconsciousness of delirium.

Weeks passed away, and Nelly slowly recovered health and strength, thanks to her vigorous youthful constitution. Often and often she turned her face upon the pillow and prayed for death—her life looked so utterly bare to her, but the prayer of her impatient heart was not granted, and she lived to play her part in the drama of life.

During those weary days of suffering, Nelly had two friends beside Aunt Katy who were ever ready to perform all those offices of kindness so dear to an invalid. These were Agnes Lee, the one companion she had among the girls of the village, and Robert Derrick, a fisherman's son. The latter had always been a favorite with her father for his manly frankness and unusual intelligence; and the fastidious Keith had given Robert many a lesson in the sciences, charmed by his eager perseverance and quick perception.

At the close of a sultry summer day, which even the sea-breeze could only render tolerable, the three friends were sitting together upon the rude piazza that adorned the front of Nelly's home. The latter had nearly recovered from the effects of her illness, and only an additional look of delicacy betrayed the fact that she was still

slightly an invalid. Elinor Keith possessed a face of singular and expressive beauty—a beauty that would be more truly appreciated by the cultivated and refined than by the class of people around her. To speak in the language of one of her neighbors, they thought, "Nelly aint so dreadful handsome, after all, but she has a way, somehow, to make you feel as if you'd do anything for her."

And, indeed, Nelly possessed the power of fascination to an unusual extent. There was a winning sweetness in her manner, a look bright and yet tender in her dark eyes, that was perfectly irresistible to ordinary mortals. Her eyes were large, dark and gentle in their expression; her dark brown hair fell in rich curling masses around a fair and delicately-featured oval face, which was rendered bewitching by the variety of its ever-changing expressions, and her form was slight and graceful. At times, a light as of another world illumined her features, for she was a true child of genius, though she knew it not.

Agnes Lee, who sat at Nelly's right, was a perfect English blonde in complexion, pretty, and chiefly remarkable for her truly affectionate disposition. To look from the face of Agnes to that of Elinor was like glancing from a placid lake beneath serene heavens to a beautiful cascade, adorned by a rainbow where the sunshine falls upon its misty spray.

On Nelly's left sat Robert Derrick, than whom no titled favorite of fortune could boast a nobler presence. Manly he was in every sense of the word, and the fearless yet engaging glances of his deep blue eyes bespoke a soul superior to small aims or selfish aspirations. He looked with unmistakable tenderness at Nelly's half-averted face, as she gazed, with a look of deepest sadness, far out over the sunlit ocean. Agnes regarded them both and a shadow of pain dimmed the sunny light in her eyes as she, for the first time, realized the nature of Robert's feelings for Nelly. Ah, gentle Agnes! the pure love that filled her guileless heart was destined to meet with no fitting response from one whose whole soul was engrossed with thoughts and dreams of another. A silence had fallen on the group, and Elinor's eyes were still regarding the placid stretch of waters, when she spoke:

"Do you know, I have a feeling to-day

as if something terrible were coming? I have often had such sensations before a tempest, but never so strongly as now. Yet it does not look as though there would be a storm very soon; certainly, never was there a brighter day than this; but in the very sunshine there seems to lurk a shadow that settles down thickly over my heart."

"O, it is only an invalid's fancy," returned Agnes, encouragingly, ever ready to cheer her friend. "One would not think, dear Nelly, that you were bred by the sea, from your strange dread of storms."

"I know it," returned Elinor, dreamily. Then, a look of animation kindling her beautiful eyes, she said, "I had a wonderful dream last night; would you like to hear it?"

Both her companions smiled assent as she looked from one to the other, and she began:

"I dreamed that I saw my father, and his face shone with angelic glory. He seemed to be standing above me at the head of a flight of steps, and he smiled upon me with the one word—'Come.' I cried out in thankfulness and joy at seeing him, and, as I was about to step up and grasp his hand, he vanished from my view; and, instead of heavenly brightness, I beheld a barren coast, and I was standing on a cliff that overlooked the sea. Resting on the placid waves I saw a small bark, which had only one occupant, and that a woman. As I looked, she turned her face toward me, and I saw, to my astonishment—myself! Yes, it was the face and form of Elinor Keith! 'It is true, then,' I thought, 'that we each have a double, and that girl in the boat is my *alter ego*.'

"I watched the phantom of myself with the greatest interest, and saw the frail shallop glide on. Suddenly a dark cloud arose and overspread the sky, the wind howled fiercely, and the sea became covered with foam. I tried to cry out to the figure in the boat to return quickly to the shore, but found myself speechless. The wild waves were tossing hither and thither, and seemed to converge to a common centre, forming a mighty whirlpool. Toward this fatal spot the boat with its one occupant was swiftly gliding, while I beheld with horror the dreadful fate that awaited my other self.

"On, on she swept, now rising on the

crest of a great wave, now sinking out of sight between the mighty billows, and the Maelstrom grew fearfully near. With a strange agony, as if I were witnessing my own destruction, I watched the boat and its freight. Into the fatal whirlpool they swept, and the boat commenced to circle round and round, each circle growing smaller as it approached the centre. Another second, and the boat and girl would disappear forever; but, as suddenly as it came, the gloom dispersed, and, instead of the foaming whirlpool, I saw a calm sunny sea, and instead of the boat and its occupant, a beautiful island, and the figures of a man and woman walking under blossoming trees. Their backs were towards me, but in the girl I recognized my mysterious other self. I awoke with a haunting feeling of dread that has not entirely left me yet."

As she ceased speaking, Elinor fell back wearily in her chair, the bright blush brought to her cheek by the excitement of narration changing to unusual pallor. Agnes laughed merrily as she exclaimed:

"Quite a wonderful dream, truly, dear Nelly. I have had just such ones myself, but, behold, I never had an adventure in my life, and I dare to predict that nothing will come of yours. It had a good termination, too."

But Robert seemed to be more deeply impressed with Elinor's fancies, and involuntarily glanced around the horizon, as if to convince himself that no storm was gathering. All was apparently clear, and the smooth expanse of the sea certainly gave no hint of any near commotion. Elinor watched his face, and when he turned to her with a reassuring smile, her own countenance brightened as if she felt strengthened by his ready sympathy.

"It was a singular dream," said he, "but you are not strong, and imagined it for that reason, probably."

Then a silence again ensued, and the hues of twilight deepened and darkened into night; the stars shone out, and the moon came up, pouring her silvery light over the waters, and softening the jagged outlines of the cruel rocks upon whose pitiless sides many a noble ship had been cast by wind and wave. Soon it grew too late for the convalescent to be exposed to the air even of a summer night. The good-nights were said—Robert held Nelly's del-

icate hand in his own strong clasp for a moment, and Agnes pressed her red lips to her cheek in a farewell greeting, for which she was envied.

Could they all have watched the sky that night, they would have seen a rapid change take place in the aspect of things. Wild-looking scuds soon chased one another over the sky, the wind rose, and brought with it a tempest-cloud black with destruction, and lit fearfully at short intervals with fiery flashes and vivid forks of lightning, followed by crash after crash of thunder. As the storm went on, Elinor awoke from her light slumber, and shuddered as she listened to the war of the elements. Going to the window, she drew back the curtains and looked out. A raging sea roared before her, shown by the almost incessant flashes, and far out on the water she caught sight of a vessel struggling for life against the forces of the tempest. Aunt Katy found her at the window, and tried to draw her away, but in vain; and at last had to content herself with throwing a light shawl around her and remaining by her side.

Nearer and nearer came the fated vessel as it was revealed in the quick electric glare, and the signal-guns sounded mournfully to the ears of the watchers, for no help could reach the human souls on board in that tempestuous sea. The men of the village were on the alert, and all was done that was possible under the circumstances. The ship struck at a point near Elinor's home, and soon after they heard the tramp of men, and a rap on the door that heralded a demand for admittance, and succor for the seemingly dead man they bore into the house. Then all was confusion, soon reduced to order by the calm directions of Aunt Katy. The stranger was quickly restored to consciousness, and finally sank into a heavy sleep. Elinor, who could take no active part in the scene, at last closed her weary eyes, and quiet again reigned at the cottage.

When the morning sun shone upon the treacherous main it lighted a scene of disaster on the shore. Knots of the fishermen were gathered to inspect the wreck, and all faces were saddened, for four lives had been lost.

At Nelly's home there was anxiety, too, for the stranger who had been brought there the night before moaned in a high

fever, and the physician declared that only the most careful nursing could save his life. Elinor, at this, insisted on taking her place at his bedside for a part of the time, as Aunt Katy was already worn with watching and care for herself, and, as usual, she had her way, though with many remonstrances from her faithful nurse. The stranger called continually for "John," who was afterward ascertained to have been his servant and among the drowned.

The person thus unexpectedly introduced into Elinor's home was a man apparently about thirty, tall, with very haughty clear-cut features, light-brown curling hair and beard, and very bright glittering blue eyes. His hands were soft and white as a woman's, and his whole appearance indicated wealth and refinement. If his eyes shone coldly as ice in the sunshine, and his lips curled oftener with a sneer than a genuine laugh, it was not particularly noticed by those about him, and his soft low-pitched voice and gentle manners won the favor of Elinor and Aunt Katy. They soon learned his name and destination from his own lips. He was, he informed them, Sir Edward Morton of Morton Hill, of Leicestershire, and was on his way home from a tour abroad when he nearly lost his life from the effects of the tempest. He seemed deeply to regret the loss of his favorite servant, and commissioned Elinor to write to his London banker for remittances, part of which, on receiving them, he sent to the man's widow, with a letter informing her of the manner of her husband's death, Elinor still acting as amanuensis.

Indeed, as Sir Edward grew better, and was pronounced out of danger by his physician from town, he appeared to enjoy nothing more than to watch the beautiful and varying countenance of Nelly as she read to him from her favorite authors to amuse him during the slowly passing hours of convalescence. At length he walked for the first time from his room to the little parlor and sitting-room combined, and was surprised to see the grand piano, the only article indicating wealth in the apartment. Turning to Nelly, he inquired:

"Do you play and sing, Miss Elinor?"

"I did once, for my father's pleasure and my own," she replied, while the quick tears of anguish filled her eyes as she remembered the happy hours when she had sung for him whom she would see no more.

Not seeming to notice her emotion, the young baronet threw himself into an easy-chair, and begged for a song. Elinor reluctantly approached the instrument, but so great an influence had her guest already established over her, that she felt a refusal would be impossible; while she knew that to grant the request would cause her most exquisite pain. Softly touching the keys, she played a mournful prelude, and then sang a touching song of "Regret." As she sang her eyes grew luminous with feeling, her voice, wonderful as ever, thrilled in harmony to the melody, and music, her one great passion, absorbed her entirely to the forgetfulness of everything else. Her auditor started as the first full rich tones of that exquisite voice fell on his ear, and listened spellbound to the end, wonder and admiration visible on his face.

"Can it be possible that you have a voice like that and yet are unknown?" he exclaimed, as she ceased singing. "Why, child, it would make you rich and famous in London."

A faint flush brightened Nelly's cheek as she heard his praises, and a new light shone in her eyes. Ambition, that had before lain dormant and unsuspected, awoke to be incited to greater earnestness by the influence of the brilliant man of the world. For the first time, Elinor began to dream of fame and musical successes. From that day the baronet evinced the greatest interest in Nelly's talent, and he tested her voice thoroughly. He was himself no mean musician, and rightly judged of the sensation this beautiful young girl would create in the fashionable world of London, even with the culture she had already received, for, as I have said, Malcolm Keith had given his daughter the advantage of the best instruction in music, little thinking that he was thus preparing the way for a life at once brilliant and severe. Could he have foreseen the perilous height to which his lovely child would attain he would have trembled for the tender flower which had hitherto been so carefully sheltered. But the future is veiled from mortal eyes, and the web that fate was weaving progressed toward the end.

Well did the baronet understand how to paint glowing word-pictures that should excite the young girl's ambition and love of admiration, and he had a powerful auxiliary in her own sincere and passionate

devotion to music. To be a great singer, to win the crown in that arena, seemed to Nelly the grandest of achievements, and she felt instinctively that she was born for it, and would wear her honors well.

The time drew near when Sir Edward was to depart for London, and he offered to introduce Elinor to her new life, and use his influence—which was considerable—in her favor. Once before the public, he knew she would need no further intercessor. After much indecision and many doubts, conquered by her ambition and the longing that grew upon her to break away from the monotonous life which she had lived, but which had become so dreary since her father's death, Elinor decided to leave her old home, perhaps forever, and go out to a new destiny. She informed Aunt Katy of her decision, to that worthy woman's utter astonishment and dismay, and ended by saying that if she would go with her she should be very glad, but if not some one else must take her place, and she could remain at the cottage. At this Aunt Katy burst into tears.

"O child!" she cried, "you will break my heart. Do you think that if you were going to certain death I would not go with you? If you must take this step, which is enough to make your poor father rise from his grave, of course I will stand by you and do you all the good I can; and it's need of it you'll have, I'm thinking. Will nothing change your mind?"

But no; Elinor was obstinately firm, and Aunt Katy packed the few necessities for their journey with quivering hands and tear-filled eyes. Better than Nelly she realized the difficulties that lay before her beloved foster-child, while at the same time she felt that it would be useless to try to convince her of them.

"Time will tell! Time will tell!" she murmured; "and may God help me to shield my poor lamb from all harm. The pretty trusting darling!"

If Sir Edward had hoped that some less devoted companion would take Aunt Katy's place, he did not betray the feeling, but appeared pleased with the arrangement. During the baronet's stay Robert Derrick had been seen at the house but very few times, and when he had called Elinor had been so monopolized by the stranger that she had hardly given him a word, and the haughty aristocrat had so completely ig-

mored Robert that he felt his cheek redden with his rising anger and had quickly departed, bitterly regretting the evil chance that had sent the rich nobleman to their shores.

Now that Nelly was to go away, it might be never to return, Aunt Katy proposed that she should take a farewell of her two dearest friends, Agnes Lee and Robert Derrick, but, to her surprise Elinor absolutely declined doing so, saying that she wished no one to know where she was going or what was her object. Fate, however, or circumstance, either that you like best to call it, ordered that she should not depart without once more holding a hand of each of her true friends.

It was the last evening before the young girl was to start on her journey and leave her childhood's home, which she was destined never again to enter with the same child's heart that as yet she had preserved in all its freshness. Rosy clouds still floated in the blue western heavens, and a single star had blazed out in advance of all its golden sisterhood, royal in its beauty and first maid of honor to the moon. The sea was quiet and murmurously musical as upon that evening when we first beheld Elinor and her two friends. Nelly had gone out for one last lonely stroll along the coast, one farewell visit, full of tender regret, to her father's grave. Kneeling there, and breathing a prayer for guidance in the new path before her, she caught the wondrous glow of the queen of all the stars, fair Venus, and murmured—"It is the star of Love and not of Fame, but may both be mine!"

Plucking one flower from the sod she passed slowly on, and when she again reached the cliffs was saluted by the voice of Agnes, who advanced toward her followed by Robert, whose cheek flushed with a deeper hue while his large eyes betrayed a stronger feeling than his words expressed.

They little thought that it was the knowledge that this was their parting interview, perhaps for years, perhaps forever, which gave such an added warmth to Elinor's greeting, or caused her to grasp their hands with such clinging force. Robert was only too glad to meet her alone once more, for he felt an instinctive dislike for the handsome supercilious stranger, who evidently scorned to bandy words with Robert Derrick the fisherman's son.

Elinor had grown more like her old self (with a difference) in the past few weeks, for the whispers of ambition are inspiring, and she had not brooded so incessantly over her grief. Her cheeks bloomed with a brilliant color, her eyes shone like twin stars, and the perfect head with its coronal of waving tresses no longer drooped like a broken lily, but was poised as gracefully as the same flower when it first opens in all its regal beauty. As she and Robert stood together, he with his noble Saxon face like a young sea-king of one of the old Norse legends, Agnes owned to her own gentle unselfish heart that they were well mated.

Long the two wandered by the sea, and at last, when they thought of turning their steps homeward, Robert begged for one song from Nelly before they should part. She, knowing that the parting was for longer time than he knew, did not refuse, but, standing facing the sea, the moonlight falling full upon her lovely upturned brow, she sang as never she had sung before, and as, in after years, to the immense audiences who delighted to do her honor, she could not sing—a song of farewell:

"I hear the voice of the sea,  
As it murmurs with ebb and swell,  
It whispers one word to me:  
    'Farewell!'

"The wind sweeps by with a sigh,  
And it sounds to me like a knell,  
For a wailing voice doth cry  
    'Farewell!'

"I looked to a glowing star  
And a fiery meteor fell;  
As a voice said from afar—  
    'Farewell!'

"I gathered a blossom fair,  
But too quickly the petals fell,  
While floated on the air—  
    'Farewell!'

"I said, 'Is there naught on earth  
That a sunnier fate will tell?  
Must we say to all of worth  
    'Farewell!'

"Then I clasped a hand I knew,  
With sorrow's rising swell,  
As I breathed to one so true  
    'Farewell!'

"But my soul, which had been sad  
At the tale which all things tell,  
Soared heavenward with one glad  
    'Farewell!'

The last notes died away on the air, but the spell which the melody had worked yet remained, and the three friends walked on



as if in a dream. At Elinor's door there was a pressure of hands, a kiss from Agnes, and she and Robert turned toward their homes, while Nelly gazed after them, noting the kingly air of one, who, though only a fisherman's son, was evidently one of earth's noblemen. Looking back, they saw her standing there, and sent a last good-by.

In the morning Elinor was gone, the house was closed, and after a few days of wonderment the sudden departure ceased to be a subject of thought to any one except the two faithful friends who always cherished the hope of again meeting the wanderers. To Robert Derrick the blow was most grievous and unexpected, and he made many attempts to trace Elinor, but without success. Not knowing of her newly aroused musical ambition, which knowledge would have guided him, he was completely puzzled, but felt that Elinor's disappearance was somehow due to the influence of the stranger who had so long been an inmate of the cottage on the cliffs. He shut his teeth hard as he thought of this, and clenched his hands as if ready for a tilt against some imaginary antagonist. Sometimes he would wander in his lonely walks to the cottage once rendered so dear by the lovely presence of Elinor, and would be startled into a deeper sense of his own loneliness as he was confronted by the closed shutters and general air of neglect. Then he would turn away, nearly wild with a desire to penetrate this mystery, reproaching Nelly mentally for thus deserting her friends without a word of explanation. But Nelly was gone.

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Six years have passed away since last we visited the little fishing hamlet of N—, and yet it looks the same as in the past. The changes, if any there be, have been more in the lives of the people than in any outward things. Elinor's home still stands on the cliff, weather-beaten, and bearing traces of its unoccupied condition for so long a time, for Elinor had come to be forgotten, except by a very few.

One summer evening two young people walked slowly along the path nearest the sea, one slight and very frail, leaning upon the strong arm of the noble-looking man at her side. They are our old acquaintances, Robert and Agnes, but how different! The intervening years since last we saw them have given to Robert Derrick a manlier

look, a perfection of all the grand forces, mental and physical, which his youth had indicated. He has not spent all these years in the quiet country, but is already a man noted among men for his genius as an engineer. The fine intellect that attracted the attention of Malcolm Keith so long ago has asserted its power, and fame and wealth have been the result.

With Agnes it was different, yet she, too, is changed. Gentle and lovely always, there is now an ethereal look to her frame, a wonderful brightness in the soft blue eyes, an unwonted and rare scarlet on the cheek. The small hand resting on Robert's arm is almost transparent in its thinness, and the slight cough that occasionally falls on the air tells of a danger too near. In all this time there had been no trace gained of Elinor, and it is of her they are speaking.

"It is strange, Robert," said Agnes, "that we should lose her so utterly. O my dear Nelly! I do so wish to see her again before I die. No, do not shake your head so encouragingly, Robert; my fate is sealed, and it is better so. Believe me, I have no morbid fear of death, no reluctance to meet it when it comes, but I should be dull indeed if I did not understand the inevitable. I have a feeling, though I can give no reason for it, that if you should go to London you would meet Elinor and bring her to me."

"I fear it is only a fancy, Agnes, but I have business that calls me to London, and if it were not so I would certainly go to please you. I will start to-morrow if you desire it."

"O yes, Robert!" she exclaimed, her face lighting up with hope. "Go as soon as you can, for I have not long;" and she paused looking at him gratefully.

Robert turned away to hide his emotion, and no word was spoken as they went slowly homeward. They were the same true friends as of old, and Robert never guessed that Agnes had ever felt for him more than a sister's affection.

The bustle, and fog, and din of London. Among the many passers in the streets is one whom we know—Robert Derrick the young engineer. Overtaking a casual acquaintance who greeted him warmly, the two proceeded on their way together, talking on various subjects, till mention was made of the queen of opera, Beatrice Ronli-

On this theme Robert's friend waxed enthusiastic, and then spoke of a distinguished artist, a mutual friend, who had just completed her portrait, advising Robert to go and see it in his studio. With this the two separated, and Robert, for want of anything else to do, strolled into several studios, among them the one his friend had spoken of. He had met the artist while travelling in Switzerland, and had been able to confer a favor upon him for which he seemed very grateful. This day he greeted Robert cordially, and after a few inquiries invited him into his inner studio, saying he would join him in a few moments. A portrait, partly veiled, attracted Robert's attention, and he lifted the curtain to stand transfixed with amazement. Beautiful indeed were those large soulful eyes, that white low brow, those sweet half-arch half-sad lips, and the cheek like a blush rose. Lovely as a dream, but a dream that had once been tangible, for it was the face of a perfected Elinor!

One moment he stood motionless, in the transport of his own good fortune; the next, he turned impetuously to inquire for the original, when lo! instead of his friend the painter, the figure seemed to have stepped from the canvas and taken position behind him. There was one quick glance of mutual recognition, and of a feeling with which mere recognition had nothing to do, and then their hands met with the words:

"Robert!"

"Nelly!"

In the joy of meeting he forgot her desertion and long silence, and only saw the love of his youth, none the less dear because that love had been unspoken. She flushed "rosy red" under his delighted glances, and to all his inquiries replied:

"Come and see me, and I will give you the history of my life since I saw you." Then she asked: "Have you heard Beatrice Ronli sing?"

"No," he replied; "but I have been told of her wonderful powers, and, indeed, her fame is world-wide. I came here to see her picture, when I discovered this one of you."

"Will you grant me a favor?" Then reading assent in his face she added: "Go and hear her to-night, and do not think me cold that I do not say 'come and see me' instead. I shall be at the opera and will see you there. Now I must say good-

by. Do not leave the theatre without speaking to me, and to-morrow you must come and see me and tell me all about my dear Agnes. *Au revoir!*" And with a pressure of the hand she was gone.

Robert soon followed, and went to his hotel filled with mingled emotions of pain and pleasure, for he was yet puzzled, and till the mystery should be explained, questions would arise in his mind. But he put aside all this, and the evening found him on his way to the opera.

The audience was of even unusual splendor, and the light was reflected flashingly from the gems that decked the brows, necks and arms of the beauty and fashion of the great city. Expectation was at its height, for the beautiful prima donna had excited the greatest *furor* among all music lovers, and those who could not appreciate yet applauded because it was the fashion. Robert Derrick gazed eagerly about him in search of Elinor, but she was nowhere to be seen, and he waited listlessly for the rising of the curtain.

At last the moment came, and a beautiful vision greeted his eyes, while thunders of applause filled the air. Spellbound, he gazed at the lovely singer, bowing her thanks so gracefully, for in the exquisite spirituelle beauty of that face he saw the vision of the morning. She sang, and the voice, improved somewhat by study, was yet the same that had so charmed him while breathing its last—"Farewell." The mystery was solved, and he mentally accused himself of stupidity for not reading the riddle before. Agnes was right; he had, indeed, found Elinor. Yet such is the perversity of the human heart, that, had he not been bound by a promise to the fading Agnes, he would have left London without a second interview; for, he argued, had she not cast them off? and was she not in all probability satisfied with her great successes? Beatrice Ronli, the brilliant and admired prima donna, was less dear to him, he fancied, than the sweet Nelly of old. Besides, had she not let all these years pass without sign or token of remembrance of her early friends? But the delicate face of Agnes rose reproachfully before him, and the thought of her disappointment decided him to conquer his pride and deliver the message from her to Elinor. That there was a personal wish under it all he would not acknowledge to himself for a moment. So he

sat and was charmed and thrilled in spite of himself, and pleased, too, at the superb triumph of the singer. At the close, he made his way behind the scenes and waited where he knew Elinor must pass. Soon he saw her advancing, but not alone; withdrawing into the shadow he awaited her approach. The gentleman by her side looked familiar in the distance, and as he drew nearer, displayed the never-to-be-forgotten form and features of Sir Edward Morton.

A pang of jealousy keen as a dagger wrung the heart of Robert Derrick. Elinor was evidently deeply excited. Her eyes were flashing with indignation, her lips quivering with scorn. Her subdued but contemptuous tones reached the ears of the unseen listener.

"Sir Edward Morton, you call yourself a nobleman, and yet you are so unmanly as to take advantage of the fact that I am unattended to-night, to force your hateful attentions upon me. If you had the least spark of generosity in your nature, you would leave me as I request. But I will not endure this. I have a friend, and I will appeal to him to protect me."

"Don't get excited, my pretty songstress, though your anger only makes you so much the more beautiful, and therefore I excuse it. It is useless, *mon amie Beatrice*, for you to think to escape me, and your resistance only makes me more determined to win you for my own. It is not so hard a destiny; many a lady of noble birth would not scorn to become Lady Morton, and all my possessions I lay at your feet. O my haughty little queen! you may toss your handsome head as proudly as you please; you are in my power, and I *will* not give you up. Have I not helped you to all this grand career? Would you have ever left the dingy hamlet of N—— if I had not aroused your ambition? As for this friend you speak of, doubtless he is more powerful than the king himself—perhaps it is even the high and mighty young fisherman who dared to lift his plebeian eyes to you in such evident admiration;" and a sneering laugh sounded on Robert's ear. He restrained himself with difficulty from springing upon the insolent nobleman, and followed the two silently.

Without deigning to answer, Elinor swept on to the door where a carriage awaited her. Refusing Sir Edward's outstretched hand,

she sprang in, when, with a mocking laugh and a gesture to the driver, Sir Edward was about to step in after her, exclaiming:

"Now I have you, my pretty bird! This is *my* coachman, not yours!"

But the words had no sooner left his lips than a powerful hand hurled him aside with so much force that he reeled and fell stunned upon the pavement. The coachman sprang from the box with an oath, but Robert (for the new-comer was he) was too quick for him, and dealing him a blow that rendered him powerless for a time, he mounted to the driver's seat himself and said to Elinor:

"Do not be alarmed, but tell me where you wish to go."

She gave him her address, and soon they arrived at the hotel where Beatrice Ronli, the prima donna, had taken apartments. What need to tell the joy and gratitude of Elinor, or the still deeper delight of Robert, who had that night heard words which convinced him that Sir Edward Morton was not the possessor of Elinor's heart. Aunt Katy, her hair a little more silvery and her face pale from recent illness, greeted him with unconcealed pleasure, and explained the reason for Elinor's lack of a companion that night. The faithful woman had been ill, and Nelly, seeing her feebleness, had declared that there was not the least need of her attendance—she would have a carriage at the door, and could go and come alone without any trouble; so she insisted that Aunt Katy should remain quietly at home, and would take no refusal.

There were long explanations that night, and Elinor told how she had come to the great metropolis bearing a letter from Sir Edward Morton to a distinguished musical director, who immediately became interested in her, realizing the wonderful quality of her voice; how she had at first devoted herself chiefly to study, and then had departed to travel in foreign countries where she shone in concert room and opera. Finally she had returned to England and became the unwilling recipient of the marked attentions of Sir Edward Morton, who appeared to consider her his own by right of their early connection. Hitherto Elinor had succeeded in evading him, but this night he had apparently a deep laid plan to gain by force what he could not obtain by soft speeches and costly gifts. Elinor shuddered as she realized his unscrupulous

pulousness, and glanced gratefully at Robert whose strong arm had so well defended her.

"And why have you never shown by word or sign that you had not forgotten your old friends?" asked Robert at last.

"At first I was too proud, and would not write until my success was assured, and afterward I wrote and received no answer, so that I imagined you had forgotten me and did not care to know of my fate. But lately my heart has yearned for the old home and the old faces more than ever. For a long time I looked upon Sir Edward Morton as a kind and disinterested friend, and it was to him that I entrusted the letter directed to you, after I had written to Agnes without result. Can it be possible that he destroyed it? You remember that he took a son of one of the villagers away with him in place of his own servant, who was drowned, and it was through this man, that I learned of your happy marriage. It is late for congratulations, but mine are most sincere. Agnes is the sweetest of girls."

"Agnes? My marriage?" ejaculated Robert. "What can you mean? I am not married, nor is Agnes."

"Then it is false! another of the base deceptions of which I have been the dupe!" she ceased speaking suddenly, blushing crimson beneath his earnest glance. Then hastily added: "My dear Agnes! how much joy it would give me to see her!"

Thus reminded of his mission, Robert told with subdued tone, of how like a faded lily Agnes had grown, and how she longed to see once more the cherished friend of olden times. Elinor heard with many tears, and determined to hasten to the dying girl.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was sunset, and the crimson light streamed over the water with a glow of inexpressible beauty. Agnes, with face white as her pillows, save where the hectic flush had not yet faded quite away, looked out

upon the ocean, realizing that it was her farewell gaze. Yes, the earth, with all its glorious tints of sunrise and sunset, its summer verdure, and sweet broideries of blossoms, would henceforth only give her a resting-place upon its bosom—and she was content. The two who were dearest to her of all the world watched beside her, and her heart was at rest. Her breath grew very faint as the sunset glow waxed paler, and reaching out one thin white hand she took Elinor's, warm, living and pink-lined, and placed it in the stronger clasp of Robert, laying her own lightly above them.

"You two will be happy, and it is right. May Heaven bless you!" Then she whispered "Sing, dear Nelly!"

In a voice half-choked, at times, with an emotion repressed for the sake of the dying girl, Elinor sang the beautiful lines commencing:

"Beyond these chilly winds and gloomy skies,  
Beyond death's cloudy portal,  
There is a land where beauty never dies  
And love becomes immortal."

The sweet strain ceased, and all was still; Elinor's kiss was pressed upon a marble-like cheek. The feet of Agnes already trod the beautiful shore of the Hereafter.

One more picture and I have done. An ocean steamer is receiving its complement of passengers, and on deck, a little aside from all the rest, stand two who look upon the scene around them a moment, and then, with a happy smile, into each other's eyes and seem content.

Among those who have come to say farewell to a gay party of tourists, is one in whom the two cannot be mistaken. The recognition is mutual, and a flash of baffled hatred lights the eyes of Sir Edward Morton as he turns on his heel, glad to escape from the view of happiness which he had tried so unsuccessfully to prevent. The sun is bright, the sea is calm, and life is very very sweet to Robert and Elinor Derrick, who have set their faces toward the orange groves and sunny skies of Italy the Fair.

## ELM HOUSE.

BY E. J. WHITNEY.

WE were in search of a house, Paul and I, and when we saw Elm House we exclaimed in one breath, "What a lovely place!"

Elm House was a large old-fashioned brick house, with balcony and veranda running round two sides, and a neatly laid out yard surrounded by stately elms of a century's growth. The wide low rooms pleased us, and we were soon installed in Elm House.

The neighbors made so many queer remarks that I laughingly remarked to Paul:

"I should think the place uncanny, by appearances."

"Perhaps it is," with a smile. "Why, Nell!" in a surprised tone.

"What is it?"

"Some one struck me."

"Has the ghost come so soon?"

"Nonsense!" impatiently.

We had been at Elm House about a month, when Paul was late, and I ran down to the gate to meet him. Hearing a convulsive sobbing, I ran back to the house. The door was closed and refused to open. Bright lights shone through blood-red curtains, low soothing words mingled with wild sobs as the door swung open of its own accord, and a funeral train wound slowly down the walk. A fair-haired, blue-eyed child stood on the steps sobbing wildly, her little arms outstretched after the silent loved one who nevermore would heed the pleading childish voice. A young woman now appeared, and taking the child in her arms, disappeared up the oaken staircase, the door closing quickly and noiselessly behind her.

"Whither roam your thoughts, little one?" called Paul's familiar voice, a moment later.

Making some light reply, I watched with some curiosity to see him open the door. After several ineffectual efforts he asked, in surprise, what made me fasten the door as I came out.

"I did not fasten it," I replied.

He rang the bell; the girl tried her skill in vain to let us in, and we were obliged to go round the back way.

That night, as I was passing through the hall, I found the door open, and closed and bolted it. Paul, coming in soon after, said, carelessly:

"You opened the door, did you not? but why did you not close it?"

Next day he examined the door thoroughly, but found nothing wrong.

It was not long before Jane said, abruptly:

"I can't stay any longer, ma'am."

"What is the trouble?" inquired I.

"Nothing with you, ma'am, but the house. It's enough to make your hair rise to hear the groans and cries I've heard since I've been here, and I can't stand it any longer."

"Do you see anything?"

"Yes indeed, I do. I see two men, a woman and a child," her voice falling to a whisper. "There's something awful been done here."

"Nonsense!" said I. "You had a bad dream probably."

"I was wide awake as ever I was," she retorted, in a positive tone.

I laughed, coaxed, and offered to increase her wages to no purpose. Here I will say that I had several girls, but none stayed over a week until— But I anticipate.

It was a lovely August night, and Paul and I sat in the parlor singing duets by moonlight. The silver moon shone into the room with mild beauty, and pale shadows danced and played on wall and carpet as the fragrant summer wind stirred the elm branches.

"How cool and refreshing this wind is," exclaimed Paul, suddenly.

As he spoke I felt a current of cold air fill the room; so cool, indeed, I shivered in my thin dress. The air grew colder, and an awful fear of I knew not what chilled my blood. I glanced at Paul; his face was deathly pale.

There was the sound of footsteps in the hall, the door swung open silently, a man entered bearing a dead child—the same I had seen on the steps—in his arms.

He walked to the hearth—Elm House had an old-fashioned brick hearth and fireplace—removed the bricks, placed the child in the cavity, and then replaced the bricks.

The next day Paul had the bricks removed, and to our horror there was found the skeleton of a child.

We were not disturbed for some time after

this, and when we were, the ghostly sights had entirely changed in character, and were only seen in the chambers, one small room at the back of the house being particularly affected. At night a woman might be seen slowly traversing the rooms, looking back with fearful glances, as if she were followed, always going to the smaller room.

One night, late in October, I was awakened by a feeling of dread. To my dismay I saw the face of my ghostly visitor close to my own. Waving her hand, as if for me to follow her, she moved to the door. With a beating heart I rose. Swiftly she glided on through hall and chambers, never pausing until reaching the room I before mentioned. Touching a black spot on the paper a tiny door swung open, showing a narrow shelf laden with manuscripts.

There was a slight noise, and turning I saw a man glaring with fierce fiendish eyes on the woman's shrinking figure. He appeared to ask some question. She drew herself up to her full height with a gesture of disdain and loathing. With one stride he was by her side, grasping her throat. There was a gurgling cry, and with a wild shriek, I fell lifeless to the floor.

"Is she dead?" I asked, eagerly, on recovering.

Then, seeing Paul's bewildered face, I told him what I had seen. Together we sought the chamber, and lo! the secret door stood open. With eager hands we gathered up the papers and read:

"June, 1834.

"With the consciousness that death—perhaps violent—is near me, that I pen these pages, hoping at some future time some one will find them.

"There were only three of us—Maurice, Hattie and I—Fanny Hartwell. Hattie married a poor man, and father, a stern old man, never forgave her, or allowed me to visit her; but I did secretly until she went west. I never heard from her afterwards, but I can't believe they are all dead, Hattie, Leslie and little Paul, if *they* do tell me so. It is to make my will in their favor, and I never will—never!

"When father died I went to live with Maurice. His wife's father and brother were there also. In a little while Maurice sickened and died. O, the horror, the agony I suffered when I knew *they* poisoned him! In a few weeks his wife followed him, and I was alone, save their little girl. O, how angry they were when Clara died, and they were not guardians to little Dell.

"I wanted to go to Hattie then, but Dell was ailing, and they kept me closely. O my darling, I can hear your shrieks of agony even now, when the cruel blows cut your tender flesh! My brain is on fire as I think. Well, my darling died, and Jasper took up the brick hearth to put her under it. There is another angel in heaven to greet me when I go. All are gone, all!

"They—Jasper and his father—have tried every way to make me marry one of them. I shall carry the marks of their brutality to my grave, but I will never yield, Heaven help me! never."

Here a number of pages were blotted. Several months had elapsed before the narrative again commenced.

"It is nearly over. Heaven is close by. If Hattie only knew!

"Jasper little thinks my will was made long ago. I knew of this secret place and have kept it here ever since.

"I dreamed last night that Hattie and Leslie were gone, but little Paul will perhaps have the money that has caused me this living death. All of mine and Maurice's, too, now little Dell has died."

Here the narrative closed abruptly.

"Yes, it is me! I am little Paul!" exclaimed Paul, excitedly, as he perused the will. "I have a faint remembrance of her," he continued, "but we never heard from her after going west. Poor Aunt Fanny!"

The will was proved, and Paul received his aunt's property; not all, but enough to set him up in business, and give us a beautiful home with considerable besides.

Elm House was never after disturbed.



## ENGLISH PEG-LEGGED BOB.

BY DR. CHARLES H. STEADMAN.

YES sir, I'm what you call a sub—a sub-contractor under Mr. Tracey. Me and my wife Sal, and Bos the curly-haired dog are pretty well known up and down wherever there's a bit of excavating going on. But as for sending me a letter, I don't hardly know where to tell you to direct it. You might hear of me at the Three Pigeons, Stonycross, Brummagem, if I happened to be out of work, which aint often. Last time I was wrote to, was Providence Terrace, Banktop Cutting, Killarney, Ireland, and the postman broke his leg trying to get it to me. So perhaps you'd better not write; but if you should want to send me any money just you hand it over to Mr. Tracey's office in Great Parliament Street, and tell 'em it's for Peg-Legged Bob. I shall get it all right some time or other. As to how I got the name, why that's pretty obvious I think, looking at these timber toes of mine. It wasn't gave me by my godfathers and godmother, but you may say that I was christened by four hundred tons of rock and rubbidge as tumbled right atop of me.

This was how it happened. Me and a mate of mine was working in a butty gang on one of Mr. Tracey's lines. It was in the old man's time. Yes, he was a very decent fellow, old Tracey. There was a kind of go about him, as made you like to work for him, even if so be as you didn't make much out of it. And he was precious near. Not himself, you know, so much, as the men that was under him; but bless you, he picked 'em out just for that, else he was a free-handed sort, if you tock him on the right side, and he'd never see you ruined through any of his jobs, if you stuck to 'em plucky. Not but what perhaps there was a bit of policy about that, too, for you see you'd cut things a bit closer, knowing as if they turned out unkimmon cross, old Tracey 'ud ease you off some trifle.

I was a able-bodied young chap when it happened, and could do a day's work with anybody. I was butty of the gang, and we'd took about a thousand yards of rock and rubbidge to drive a cutting through, and was getting on very well with it too. We was making three pounds a week, every

man in the gang, for it had turned out a very plummy piece; only perhaps we was in too much of a hurry, and used our powder a little too free. It was in Staffordshire county, a sort of red sand and rock, we had cut through, a soft kind of stone as comes away in great chunks like slices of pudding. We'd cut away at both ends of our piece and had left a big lump sticking up in the middle, and we'd made up our minds to give him a jolly good shaking, with twenty pounds of powder droved twenty feet into the rock. Me and my chum, carrotty Sam we called him then, had agreed to tamp the hole and fire the shot. We'd just rammed in the charge, and Sam had got a lump of clay in his hand to slap into th' hole, when of a sudden I heard a sort of fizzling noise under my feet, and lo and behold, I'd struck out a spark with my hob-nailed boots, and the powder as we'd scattered here and there had took the spark, and the flame was running along all about like wildfire. "Run, Sam," says I; and we started off for our lives. There was the chance you see that the charge wouldn't catch, or that if it catched it would "blow" without bringing the rock down upon us. But there was no such luck. I heard a gruff sort of a bang behind me, the ground wobbled about under my feet, and down I went, tumbling over my mate, all in darkness like. There was just a minute when I felt as if I was fireworks, and turning into all kinds of lights, and then I felt one twist of dreadful pain. After that I don't remember aught till I come to myself in a sort of a dream, as it might be the nightmare. Not that I could make out where I was or nothing, only I was feeling badder than I've got words to tell you.

When I did come to myself sufficient to know where I were, I didn't feel any better. I was buried alive, sure enough, and I felt bad all over, I can tell you. Then I moved a bit with my arm and felt something soft alongside me, that groaned as I touched it.

"Sam," says I, in a gruff kind of way. "Hullo Bob," says he. "Good-by, old man," says I. "Good-by, Bob," says he. And after that we lay quite still without

speaking. How time passed I don't know, but I felt getting colder and colder, and the feeling went out of me, so as I didn't feel no more pain, and my head was clear; and I thought, ay, I thought a deal o' things. Then I spoke to Sam again, and he never answered; and I spoke again, but not a sound from him. So, thinks I, he's dead, and I'll have my groan out. And I cried out; ah, you wouldn't have thought there was strength enou' in me to have sung out as I did.

And when I'd had my cry out, now thinks I, it's all over, and I may give up the ghost. Then I heard another cry, as if it came out of the bowels of the earth, and after that there was a sound of picks and spades. Next thing I hears a voice, "Bob!" quite faint like. "Halloo," says I, "what, Sam, are ye alive yet?" "Ay," says he, "was that you as shrieked just now." "Ay," says I, a little bit nettled as Sam should have heard me. "But keep up, mate," says I, "here's help a coming;" and presently there came a shine of light and somebody sings out "Here they are."

Ah, but we'd a precious bad time of it too, after they found us. A great stone had rumbled on 'our legs and smashed 'em dreadful, one of mine and one of Sam's, his left leg and my right. The stones had collapsed together like, so as we warn't killed outright; but they'd been digging for us the wrong way, and would never have got us out alive, if it hadn't been for that shout I give, as I thought was my last. The doctors whipped our legs off fast enou' after they got us out, and then I lay on my back, in a bit of a bothie alongside the cutting, for months and months. And there it was I made acquaintance with Sal, who was Sam's sister, and come to nurse him, and she looked after me, too, first-rate. Only I never thought of getting wedded then, being, as I was, very down in the mouth, wondering what was to become of me through having lost my leg.

Howsoever, Mr. Tracey, he came down one day to see how his chaps was getting on, and he comed into the hut to have a look at me and Sam. "Well, lads," he says, "how are you by this time?" "All right, governor," I says, "what there's left of us," says I, "the doctor's took so much of us away, they'd ought to have joined me and Sam together, as might make a man between us." And Tracey, he laughed,

and said, "Well, Bob," says he, "you allus had a wooden head, and now you'll be head and foot all alike," says he. Well, I knowed by the old gent being so cheerful as there was something more behind, and, says he to a man outside, "Tom bring in them timbers!" and lo and behold there was a pair of wooden legs he'd brought from London; very neat looking things they was, too, with brass rims round the hoofs of 'em, and varnished beautiful. It seemed as the man as made them was proud of them, for there was burnt into the wood, right in the middle of each of the legs, the 'nitials of his name, P. L. B., meaning Philip Lee, Bow, Mr. Tracey told me. But one of my mates, as was a bit of a scholar, coming in by-'n-by, he takes up my leg, and says he, "P. L. B., what does that mean? Why, Peg-Legged Bob," says he, and that name stuck to me ever since.

But I was telling you about Mr. Tracey; well, that wasn't the last visit he paid me, and next time he came, he says, "Bob, you wont be much use for a navvy now," says he, "but you're a knowledgable man, and has got your wits about you; take a contrack under me," says he. "'Aint got the brass, Mr. Tracey," says I. "I'll lend you some," he says, "enough to start you; no interest to pay; but, mark you, I shall look for my money back some day." And with that he wrote me out a check for a hundred. Now Sam had a great fancy for a public-house, and Tracey helped him too, so he and I parted. But afore then Sal and I was wedded, and with Sal I took to Bos, the curly-haired dog as had been her father's, a valyble animal, sir, as hunted silent, and brought me in many a hare and rabbit in days gone by.

I did pretty well as a sub on the whole; ups and downs, and sometimes only bread and cheese for my pains, with a pound or two to the good now and then to pay back Mr. Tracey. Sam didn't do as well in the public line—made a break of it in fact, and then came back among his old pals, and kept a sort of a sly grogshop.

Well, I'd been working a good piece with Mr. Tracey in Ireland, a starvation sort of a job, as melancholy a business as ever I knowed. When we'd got through that, I heard as Mr. Tracey was making a line in Wales. Thinks I, that's working home like; so I takes the steamer to Holyhead, and jogs along to the wars. Tracey was



working this job at both ends, with one set at this end in Blamarginshire and another at the t'other end in Magonyshire. Well, I saw there wasn't a likely job for me in Blamarginshire, and so I worked on through the country. I may tell you I heard of Sam, as was doing a bit of business among the lads, but I didn't trouble to look him up, not being over friendly with him just then.

Howsoever I took a stiffish cutting at the other side of the country, Magonyshire end you know, and soon repented of my job I can tell you. I never see such a mixed sort of a place as that Wales. Everything higgledy piggledy, gravel and rock, slate and rubbidge all twisted up anyhow. There was no lodgings to be had near our cutting, so we made a sort of a camp, a row of huts, as we christened Prospect Villas. And with there being no town near, Sal set up a shop to sell groceries, and pork, and so on. It was a thing Mr. Tracey set 'his face against in a general way, any of us subs setting up shop. "'Taint right for the men," he'd say, "and it's the beginning of truck-work as I can't abide." But in this case he'd nothing to say against it. "Only," says he, "Bob, don't you go selling driak." Which I didn't, except as it might be to a friend, you know.

We hadn't been there long when who should turn up, one day, but Sam, my wife's brother. He was a big lump of a chap, just like myself, and about the same height. "I'm in a bit of trouble, Bob," says he; "lend us a pound or two, and get us run on to Brummagem." And he stayed a night with me, and I took him off afore daylight, and got him on to the ballast engine as was working on the line, and then he was all right. I never axed him what the trouble was he'd got into; it wouldn't a' been polite, you know; and Sam never told me, only that it was in Blamarginshire, where he'd been doing a bit of business among the navvies as was working at the other end of Mr. Tracey's line.

I was standing atop of the bank, one day, looking over the men as was filling a set of wagons for the tip. The road ran close by, and a gig was coming along, and I thought for a minute it was Grinwell our gaffer coming to have a look at us; and I stumped off to the road to meet him. But it wasn't him, but a rather solemn-looking chap, with a frill of black whiskers round his face. And he stops and passes the time of the day

with me. "Been in the army?" says he, pointing to my leg. "No," says I; "fall of rock." And he seemed to prick up his ears at that, and asked me a lot of questions as to how it happened, and so on. And then he begins admiring my leg—the wooden 'un—and would I mind putting it upon the step for him to see. "Ah," says he, "a nice bit of timber that; and them letters, why you've got your 'nitals on it, I see." P. L. B. "Thank'ee; good-day," says he, and drives off sharp, as if to make up for lost time.

Well, me and Sal was having our tea that night atop of the counter—we was a bit squeezed for room, there being only the shop and a back parlor and a little cook-house, and four or five lodgers, and the children and Bos—and a knock came at the door, and Bos he sets a-barking, like mad. "Come in," says I, with my mouth full of bread and cheese; and in walks two policemen and the gent I'd seen in the gig in the morning. "There's your prisoner," says he to the police; "take him off." "Why; what have I done?" says I, my heart sinking into my boot. "O," he says, selling liquor without a license." "But," I says—for my mind wasn't quite clear as I mightn't have transfixed the law, through being too careful to go as near to it as might be without breaking it,—says I, "Aint I to have my trial?" "Trial! nonsense!" says he. "Who are you?" I says. "Are you kings, lords, and commons, and judge and jury, too?" says I. Says he, "I'm the supervisor of the excise, my boy; and here's the warrant to take you to prison. You know all about it; so it's no use pretending you don't." Well, Sal cried, and Bos howled, and the children screamed, and some of my men began to get wind of what was up, and gathered about the door. "Look sharp," says the exciseman; "they'll be trying a rescue next." And with that they hurried me out, and across the line to where a dogcart was waiting, and away we went. And, presently, we came to a town called Lanpigstie, or some such name as that. Now, it so happened as I knew a man there, a lawyer—a regular hearty sort of chap—as was doing a bit of work for Mr. Tracey; and I spoke up, and said, "You must let me see my lawyer." "Your lawyer," sneered the police; "who's your lawyer?" "Why, Mr. David Evans," I said. And with that there was a whisper-

ing going on; and, presently, they said as they'd stop for half an hour at the Goat, and bait the horse; and I might send for the lawyer, if I pleased. And so Mr. David came to see me, as I was sitting in the tap-room, as glum as you please, between two policemen.

"Why, policemen," says he, as soon as he saw me, "what's all this about?" "Revenue case," say they. "Let's look at your warrant," says he; and turns it over in his hands. "All right," says he. "Now, what do you want me to do?" turning to me. "Well, sir, I want to have my trial like an Englishman," says I. "But," he said, "it tells me there, in that paper, as you have been convicted already before the magistrates of the county of Blamarginshire." "Never," says I; "no such thing. I never had my trial." "Well, that doesn't matter," he says; "if you get out of the way, and don't appear, you've only yourself to thank." "But I was never summoned or nothing." "That's difficult to prove," he says, dryly, "if they swear you was, unless you can make out an alibi. You don't deny being in Blamarginshire when this took place?" Well, I thought it over, and I couldn't deny but what I had been there, having stopped there a week or so on my way, to see if I could get a job to suit me. "Well, then," says he, "I'm sorry to say, if you can't pay the penalties and costs, two hundred and seventy-five pounds, you must go to prison." "And even that wouldn't do," says the policeman; "for there's another warrant out against him." "And what's that for?" "For assaulting the excise." Says I you're a parcel of lyingscoundrels; and, peg-legged as I am, I'll fight you, to prove the truth of your words." "O hush!" says the lawyer, laying his hand on my arms. "Why, says I, "is it feasible, as a poor lame chap, like me, should go and assault the excise?" "Well," says he, laughing, "it's within the bounds of imagination. But," he says, "if you really say you aint the man, I'll go and see Mr. Gauger, and ask him if he's quite convinced he's got the right end of the stick."

Well it was no manner of use, the excise-man was as sure he was right as if he'd been omniscious. "I've got him," says he, "he's giv' me a deal of trouble; they're a bad lot, these railway chaps, and I'll make an example of him. As for his not being the man, why that's what they all say;

they've as many aliases as thieves," says he, "but we've got this man tight, anyhow, and we'll keep him." There was nothing more to be done, and they took me right off to Blamargin Castle, and locked me up in prison. And Mr. David stuck to me like a brick, and drove all the way after us in a hired car, and stopped the night at Blamargin to be ready for the court next day.

For you see they was obliged to bring me before the magistrates through the warrant for the assault, else they'd have had me in limbo up to now, I dare say.

Well, I spent a bad night, I can tell ye. You see I was right in the middle of my work, everything hanging on to me, all my money in the mud as you may say, and only me as could pick it out. And Mr. Tracey depending on my work being finished too, and would have no mercy on me now, through having been deceived in me, as he'd say. It was almost as bad a night as I'd had under the rock. For tho' I knowed I was innocent, I knowed too as nobody would believe as I was.

Next morning, at eleven, I was walked up to the courthouse, and there was the magistrates sitting all of a row, a little man with a big nose being the principal of them, and a white-haired gent with a pleasant rosy face coming next. And alongside the magistrates, who should be sitting but Mr. Tracey. And I felt reg'lar ashamed of myself, as he should see me like this, and could hardly hold up my head.

There was a flashy young lawyer jumped up as said he represented the crown, and Mr. David sat at the other end of the table, and represented me. He was a fat-faced little chap, with a merry twinkling eye, and a round paunch, in a gray tweed suit as he'd slept in the night afore. But he was all there, every bit of him, sharp as a needle. First they put up a young chap who it seems was training for the excise business—and he gave his evidence, and told the gents all about it. How he had information, two months ago, that a man they called Peg-Leg had set up, within the last few days, a kind of sly-grogshop; how he'd gone there with a spirit level in his hand, pretending to be one of Mr. Tracey's men, and got served with a glass of whiskey, for which he'd paid fourpence. How he'd been served by a one-legged man, who he intensified as the prisoner at the bar, and who seemed to be the master of the house.

"And what particular reason have you," says the lawyer for their side, casting a sort of a sweeping glance round the court, as much as to say, here's a clincher for them, "what particular reason have you for intensifying him." "Well," says the young man, "when I first went into the shop the man had taken off his wooden leg," and was sitting without shoe or stocking on, and smoking a pipe. And I took up the leg," he says, "and observed," says he, "as it had the initials upon it, P. L. B., and I made a note of that and told the supervisor about it afterwards, and he tells me that this man's leg is marked in the same way." "Stop," said Mr. David, jumping up. Gentlemen, I object." "You're quite right," said the magistrate with the big nose, "that's not evidence, and we shall dismiss it from our minds." "Well! I shall call the supervisor to prove that," then said the other lawyer. "Now, as to the assault. After you had drunk your whiskey—you did drink it, eh?" "Yes sir," said the young man. "It didn't choke you going down, eh?" said the lawyer, looking round the 'semblage, as much as to say, "you see I'm not one with these chaps, although I'm bound to work for 'em."

But the magistrate caught him up sharp and told him not to waste time; and then the lawyer pulled up his shirt-collar and looked as if he could say a good deal if he chose, but wouldn't. And he went on. "Well, after you'd drunk your whiskey you told him who you really were." "Yes I did, sir." "And what happened then." "He called me a bad name, sir, and jumped up and said he'd kick me out of the place." "What, on one leg? did he jump up on one leg?" cried the little magistrate. "No, he'd got his leg strapped on by that time, sir?" "Screwed on by that time, ah; well, what followed," went on Mr. Lawyer. "I dared him to do it, and he made at me and I ran out." "And did he actually kick you." "He did, sir." "You're quite sure that a kick was actually delivered?" "I've proof positive, sir. I've got it in my hand, sir;" here the young man hastily undid a brown-paper parcel, and drew out a black cut-away coat. "The floor of the shop was a fine white clay, sir, and rather damp and you'll perceive that the man's foot left a clear impression upon the skirt of my coat. I've kept it carefully ever since." The young man held up the coat

for the magistrates to see, and there, sure enough, was the print of a naked foot, two dabs of white for the heel and ball of the foot, and then the marks of the five toes, all in a row.

I was quite bewildered-like for a minute, knowing as no such thing had ever happened; and then all of a sudden it struck me what the truth of it was. They'd took me for Sam—but how was I to prove the difference—Stop a bit! and with that I makes signals to Mr. David, and he jumps up and comes over to the dock and I whispers something in his ear. He nods several times and his eyes twinkles like diamonds and he goes back to his seat.

"Well!" says the other lawyer, stroking his mouth with the palm of his hand, as if he was trying to get the creases out of it. "Ha, hum! I don't want to ask you anything more," so he sits down, and up jumps my man, full of fight. "Allow me," says he, "to have a look at that coat as you hold in your hand, witness!" "Certainly," says the young man, politely, and hands it over. "Ha!" says my little lawyer, holding up the coat as if he was an old clothes-man. "That's a pretty plain footprint. You're quite sure you didn't make them marks yourself." "I've sworn otherwise," says the young man, quite dignified. "Hum, sworn otherwise; you swear in fact that this footprint was indented by the man who assaulted you." "I do most solemnly!" "You'll observe gents," said Mr. David, holding up the coat before the eyes of the magistrates, "that this is the impression of a right foot." "Eh, ah, yes!" says the hook-nosed gent, looking through his gold eyeglass. "Clearly we can see that for ourselves." "I think," cuts in the other lawyer, with a grin on his face, "my friend will find it is the wrong foot for his client." The excise seemed to relish this joke, amazing, and likewise the police, but little David looked at them quite scornful. Says he in a soft oily voice. "Robert—defendant, will you have the kindness to show the magistrates your right foot?" Whereupon I whisks my peg-leg on to the top of the rail of the prisoner's dock.

You never saw people look as blank as them as was against me. That young chap as went and proved too much got it hot, I expect, from his gauger, and that was nothing, I reckon, to what the super got from his headquarters. Their lawyer did his

best for them, I must say. First, he pooh-poohed the count altogether; it wasn't an element in his case at all, he said; and when he saw that wouldn't do, he tried to make out that people's toes weren't always on the inside edge of their feet. Then he put it that praps, being a one-legged man, I'd got a right foot on my left leg. At that I offered to show the gents my other foot, but they didn't want that. The magistrates said that clearly the excise had made a mistake, and they hoped I should be properly compensated for what I'd suffered, and so they set me free without more ado.

And when that job was finished Tracey beckoned me aside into a corner of the

room, and, says he, "Who was it, Bob, that did it? Was it Sam?" "How can I tell, Mr. Tracey," says I; "it warn't me, anyhow." "Ah," says he, "I remember now—the two wooden legs, P. L. B. Well," he says, looking quite solemn all in a minute, "You've made a better use of yours than Sam did. But Bob," says he, "here's a fiver for you for expenses, and let it be a warnin' to you, and don't you go breaking the law."

Whereupon I thanked him, and said I never would, and didn't neither as long as I was in that part of the country, for there was eyes upon me all round after that, as you may be sure.

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## FAIRIES AND FORTUNE.

BY M. A. ALDEN.

HANS KREPPE lived with his good wife on the borders of a German forest; a forest dark and sombre to look at from the outside, but within which were beautiful green sunny glades, hollows full of luxuriant vines, and tall bending ferns with some rare blossoms happier to look at than to touch.

Dame Krepppe never looked at this dark forest without a sigh, for her only child, a beautiful little girl, had strayed into it and been lost. She was five years old, with the fairness of faces and a lithesome, graceful form.

The good dame believed the fairy folk had captured her and carried her away, and every Midsummer Eve she sought out the fairy green which lay in the heart of the forest, and left gifts for the fairies of honey, and sweetened bread, and golden beads. At last, she offered her pearl earrings, and after that she had nothing more to offer.

Her gifts were accepted, but no little daughter returned, and she began to think the fairies stony-hearted indeed.

At last, one Midsummer Eve, when she

sat despondent, watching the young moon decline, suddenly she wondered as it seemed to part from itself, and sail slowly through the air towards her. She rubbed her dazzled eyes and looked again. Yes, there could be no mistaking, it was coming nearer, descending, until it rested on the window-ledge beside her, and cradled in its crescent clasp lay a tiny shining fairy.

It was a shining phantom of a moon, for the real moon was sinking steadily towards the horizon, and disappeared while the good dame talked with Fairy Luna.

"I have come," said the fairy, in a pure silvery voice, "to thank thee from our queen, for the costly and acceptable gifts that it has pleased you to send us, though wherefore we have not been able to divine, since the only child in Fairy Land is a boy whom we took from a brutal guardian into our own happy realm. Hast thou lost a little girl, as thy gifts would argue?"

"I have," said the poor dame, her eyes filling with tears. "In the dark forest; and

I hoped that the fairies had stolen her in play, and would soon restore her to me."

"We would not steal your child away from you in our maddest play," said the fairy; "at least, long enough for you to miss her, and now for your benefits we will do all that we can for you. My time here is precious, the moon is out of sight, I, too, and my phantom chariot must soon be gone. But remember, you will hear from us. Adieu!" And the fairy and phantom crescent disappeared.

"Dreaming, dreaming and nonsense!" said Hans Kreppe, when his wife related the fairy's visit, yet he had a faint hope that the good folks would help him in his farming and wood-hauling, and as the months wore away without any especial good fortune to any of them, he felt as much inclined to reproach the fickle fairy as his wife. One night he came home from working on the borders of the forest, at an earlier hour than usual, and stopping in front of the house instead of proceeding at once to the barn as was customary with him, he called to his wife to come out.

Running at his call, she saw what she supposed to be a bundle in the bottom of the wagon.

"A deer?" she asked.

Hans shook his head, saying, with a gruff tenderness of wit:

"That remains to be proved."

Then he helped his wife to rouse and dismount a boy some eight or ten years old, who rubbed his eyes sleepily, and said he was cold.

"Come in here," said the astonished dame, leading him into her warm cheery sitting-room.

"Is this home?" said the boy, now wide awake.

"Yes, it is," said Dame Kreppe, "if you like to call it so."

"It's pretty enough in Fairy Land," said the boy, "but I think I shall like being here better."

"You come from Fairy Land?" asked the dame.

"Yes, and everything is so quick, and shining, and small, there, it doesn't seem real, so they said I might come here and live with you."

"And you are welcome," said Dame Kreppe. "Hans has sighed all his life for a son."

"I'll make him a good one," said the boy.

Dame Kreppe patted him approvingly on the shoulder, and then busied herself in preparing a smoking hot supper, of which the three partook merrily.

They called the boy Ruckert, and neither could do enough for him, nor he for them. The days went quickly by until Midsummer came again.

Midsummer Eve Ruckert was to go to the fairy green and see his old friends the fairies, and carry them a pot of honey of his own gathering, for which he fought with a surly old bear, the skins of which made a capital rug in Dame Kreppe's sitting-room. But alas! a wild wind blew a hurricane this night, and Ruckert sat sadly at home, a brave little fellow for the most part, but quite cowardly under his disappointment.

"Cheer up," said Hans, piling the wood on the fire. "Midsummer Eve will come again."

"In a year," said Ruckert, mournfully.

Was it the wind blowing the door, or some one trying to get in? Dame Kreppe thought the first, but hospitable Hans, to make sure, went and opened the door.

Something misty and white like a cloud swept in, and the door slammed fiercely together.

"What have we here?" said Dame Kreppe; then she, and Hans, and Ruckert all stared, as the mist formed itself into a little girl, and looked laughingly into their faces.

"Our little daughter?" cried Hans, and the mother caught her in her arms, sobbing for joy.

It might storm as much as it pleased, and root up the whole of the handsome old forest, but what did the happy cottagers care, with their lost darling playing about them with their now contented Ruckert!

But Midsummer went with the morning, and so did the little one, to come again no more for a year; and as the fleecy cloud floated out of the doorway they beheld the sad kind face of the fairy Luna.

Dame Kreppe wept, yet could not help being thankful to the good fairy for her deception, and the promise of its repetition every Midsummer. Now her full heart overflowed upon Ruckert, and the good boy grew nobler and better every day. When Midsummer came again he was as tall as Hans, who declared he was getting quite jealous of his powers as a workman.

Ruckert had two pots of honey this year, and a panther skin to carry as an offering to

the fairies. The evening was clear and starlighted, and Ruckert would have liked well if his kind foster-parents could have gone with him, but the fairies had bidden him to come to them alone, and he loved them too well to disobey, as did also Hans and his wife. As he passed through the shadowy forest he sang a song the fairies had taught him, and gazing up through the trees at the Northern crown, he did not heed a troop of dwarfs that suddenly sprang up and opposed him.

"Hold!" cried the foremost of them, and Ruckert stopped with a whistle of wonder, asking:

"What now, my little men? do you want a pot of my honey?"

"We will buy it of you," said the spokesman in a voice shrill and piping.

"A mint of gold, then," said Ruckert, "for it is my offering to the fairies, and I must carry them its worth instead."

The dwarf laughed. "You are one, and we are many," he said; "but keep your honey, and take this gold;" handing him a heavy silken purse bursting with the precious coin.

"Keep it for yourself," said the dwarf, "for you are going out into the world and will need it."

"Going out into the world?" asked Ruckert.

"Yes, yes," said the dwarf, "but the fairies will tell you." And blowing a little whistle that hung on his belt, he and his little men disappeared in a twinkling.

Ruckert, pondering on what the dwarf had said, hurried on to the fairy circle.

The fairies were already assembled, and flew in a body to greet Ruckert, whom they led to their queen.

Ruckert deposited his gifts at her feet, adding also the dwarf's purse, for he said to himself, "I should not like to go into the world and leave kind Hans Kreppé and his wife to do without me."

"Keep that," said the fairy, handing back the purse, "for you are going out into the world."

"To leave Hans Kreppé and his wife?" asked Ruckert, boldly.

"To aid them," said the fairy.

"I aid them now," said Ruckert, "and they would miss me. Besides, I will give the purse to them, and that will aid them."

"Listen," said the fairy queen, "you will aid them better to go into the world, and you owe something to yourself. You are

growing older, and you must get you a little wife to love."

"I love the pretty little girl that Fairy Luna made to come last Midsommer," said Ruckert.

"Yes, yes," said the fairy queen, "and it is she whom you are to find out in the wide world, and bring back to Hans Kreppé and his wife."

Ruckert no longer hesitated, but was eager to go at once.

Fairy Luna was sitting on Dame Kreppé's lap, just as her little daughter had sat a long time ago, talking and laughing in her merry childish way.

"I wish Ruckert were here," she said; "but do you know, the fairies say that Ruckert is going away into the great wide world?"

"O no!" said Hans Kreppé and his wife at once. "Ruckert and his wife would never go away and leave us!"

"But he is going," said Fairy Luna, "and he will be gone a long, long time. To cheer you, I shall come often and stay, and all the fairies will help me in making your life happy while Ruckert is gone. When he comes back—I shall not tell you then what will happen, but it is good." And Fairy Luna jumped from Dame Kreppé's lap, and began playing with the kitten.

Meanwhile Ruckert joined the fairies in a joyous revel, after which the queen summoned him to her throne.

"It is now time," she said, "for thee to leave us; follow our page, and he will direct thee whither to go and what to do."

Ruckert obeyed, after taking an affectionate leave of the fairies.

"Starry-eye, the page, led him through a narrow passage which opened upon an elegant country-place.

"Go up to the door," he said, "and tell the servant who opens to you, that you have no home, and have been sent to the master of the mansion by a friend whom he once helped in poverty and misfortune. The servant will demur, but you must insist. In the presence of the master you need have no fear; he will receive you kindly, and to him you are to deliver your purse. He will return half its contents to you, only borrowing the remainder; but you are to explain to him that it is an exhaustless purse, from which both you and he are to draw money whenever you like, for any good purpose. That is all; if ever you want me, rub the

gilt bead on the end of the purse, and say 'Starry-eye' three times, and I shall appear. Adieu."

Starry-eye touched Ruckert with his wand, and he found himself in front of the door of the mansion, and upon ringing the bell confronted by the servant who looked doubtfully upon him. Ruckert at last persuaded him, as the fairy said, and stood in the presence of the master, a man not far past the middle age, who greeted him cordially, and although surprised at what he said, determined to try if the purse were all it promised.

"If it should be," he said, "you have saved me from impending ruin, and I can never be too thankful to you or the one who sent you to me at this time."

"The fair—" commenced Ruckert, but was unable to complete his sentence.

Apparently his new guardian did not notice that he had commenced saying anything, and led him into a pleasant sitting-room where he beheld a beautiful lady and a charming little girl.

"My wife and daughter," said the gentleman; and then he explained how and why Ruckert had come.

The lady rose and kissed him fondly, commanding the little girl, who hung bashfully back, to kiss him also.

"He has kept us our beautiful house," she said, "and everything about it that we love."

"You are very good," said the little girl, "and I should like you for a brother right well. I will show you my conservatory that I had just begun to enjoy, and that I was afraid was going to be taken from me."

Ruckert found little Margaret a very pleasant guide about the beautiful place which was now to be his home, and as they talked together he wondered why it was that it seemed to him that he had seen her before.

He told her about his home with Hans Kreppe, but of the fairies he never could speak.

"I would like to see that grand old forest," said Margaret. "I dream of one like it, sometimes, and it seems almost as if I had lived near it myself."

Time sped rapidly. Ruckert became a man of note, one to whom the busy world paid homage.

Margaret grew into a beautiful womanly maiden whom all loved, but among all who loved her Ruckert was the most warmly favored.

Margaret had been a sister to him for many years, but it was not as a sister that he loved her. He longed to make her his wife, yet hesitated to ask her, knowing the day that saw him wedded, compelled him also to return to Hans Kreppe's humble but still beloved home. His knowledge of the world had led him to love it and to wish to live in it, and he felt that Margaret's desires were similar. So he hesitated to declare his love, and Margaret thought he did not care for her, and her cheek paled, and she grew listless and ill at ease. At length, her mother said to Ruckert:

"You are young, rich, handsome and courted; you ought now to get married, and then you would have all that the heart can desire."

"Dear mother," said Ruckert, for he called her so, though he thought of Dame Kreppe as his mother, too, "when I wed, I give up my wealth and position and return to the kind people with whom I lived before I came to you."

"You had no home, you said, when you came to us."

"I had one till I gave it up to go to you. I love Margaret, but would she, could she give up her present life, for one so far different as it would be her lot to live if she wedded me?"

"Margaret will answer you herself better than I can," answered Margaret's mother.

Yes, Margaret was willing to live any life that Ruckert was a part of, and no life would be life without him.

When this was known Margaret's mother said:

"There is yet a revelation for me to make to both of you. Margaret is not my daughter. Once, when riding through a gloomy forest in which we had lost our way, we heard a sound like a child crying, and presently we came upon a little maiden sitting by the roadside weary and forlorn, and quite unable to tell us whence she had wandered. We took the child in with us, as lost ourselves as she, but it seemed as if the act lighted our pathway and set us right. We were soon out of the forest, and on our homeward way. All our efforts to find the lost child's home and parents were fruitless. She remained with us. We kept her gladly, and I welcomed her to my childless heart with the warmest gratitude. Have you ever regretted it, Margaret darling, that you look so sad at knowing it?"



"I regret only," Margaret answered, weeping, "to lose a mother whom I love so much."

"You do not lose me, Margaret. Are we not mother and daughter, as we have been all our life?" And she drew the young girl affectionately into her lap.

"How can I ever thank you?" Margaret answered.

"By loving me."

Ruckert stood gloomily by.

"Why that darkened face?" Margaret's mother asked of him. "Surely you are not jealous of Margaret's love for me, my son?"

Ruckert shook his head, while his handsome eyes filled with tears.

"I am a thief," he said, "who would rob you."

"Rather say that you give me more to-day than I ever ought to hope for, in giving yourself to Margaret. I have a son and a daughter now, most truly. God bless you, my children!" And she clasped their hands lovingly together.

Hans Kreppe sat with his good wife before a blazing autumn fire, slowly warming his hands. He had been hard at work all day, cutting and hauling, and although the fairies had helped him he was greatly fatigued, and felt that he was growing old.

"It must be we shall hear some word from Ruckert, ere long," said Dame Kreppe, in order to cheer him.

"Humph!" said Hans; "it's all very well to say so, but it's my opinion we never shall hear from him again."

Even as he spoke, there came a loud rapping on the door outside, and, without waiting for admittance to be granted him, Ruckert rushed in, manly and handsome, followed closely by his beautiful bride.

"Welcome, welcome," cried Hans and his wife, as soon as they recovered from their first bewilderment, and Dame Kreppe embraced Hans, meaning to embrace Ruckert, and Hans kissed her, intending to welcome Ruckert's bride. In time all this was righted, and the dame had her arms very properly round Ruckert's neck, and Margaret blushed and smiled under Hans's kind greeting.

"I was afraid I might have to call on Starry-eye to introduce me," said Ruckert. "I've told Margaret about the fairies, and especially good Fairy Luna, till she is full of love for them, and longs herself to see them."

The fire blazed up with a sudden and alarming brightness, and out of a rosy flame Fairy Luna jumped upon the polished hearth, dressed in her robe of state. The queen of fairies followed in her chariot of gold and jewels, and Starry-eye, the page, headed a troop of other fairies who ranged themselves about their queen in the form of a crescent.

Then they sang sweetly a greeting to Ruckert and his bride, to which Ruckert responded, thanking them for all the good they had done him, and laying the purse that the dwarfs had given him at the feet of the queen.

"Thou, nor thy foster-father in the world, have any longer need of it," said the queen; therefore I give it to Hans Kreppe to keep and use for you all, until his life shall end, when it shall return to you."

Then Starry-eye explained to Hans the virtues of the purse:

"So long as you use it for good, it will never fail you," he said, as he placed it in Hans's clasp.

The good man's eyes filled with joyful tears, as he in turn placed in his wife's lap the silken treasure. "It is your fortune," he said, "and now you shall buy back the earrings that you valued."

As he spoke, Starry-eye stepped forward with the earrings, which the fairies had kept until now to return to the dame. She took them in her hand, but the tears that came into her eyes were surely not tears of joy.

"My poor darling," she said, "my poor little daughter! what are these baubles, not knowing your fate?"

There was a stir among the fairies, the queen herself rose in her chariot and said:

"Dame Kreppe, behold your daughter, in Ruckert's bride."

"I know," said Dame Kreppe, striving to smile through her tears, "I ought to be thankful, but this beautiful Margaret only makes me mourn the more for the daughter whom I lost, and who might now have been like her."

"Look at this beautiful Margaret," said the queen, advancing to Madam Kreppe and drawing her wand before her eyes.

Dame Kreppe looked, and in the daughter Ruckert had brought her recognized the daughter lost so long ago in the gloomy forest.

"It is even so," said the fairy queen, as Dame Kreppe exclaimed to Hans, "It is she, it is our daughter!"

At this revelation there was great rejoicing.

"You must know the kind mother and father who found me," said Margaret. "Our happiness will not be complete until then."

"In a little while they will be here," said Ruckert; "they promised me to come."

Dame Kreppe smoothed her gown, saying:

"They are world's people, and will think little of us, I fear; but they have loved both Ruckert and my little girl, and will always be welcomed with love and gratitude by us."

The fairies then flew about the room with *their wands, adorning the walls with pictures* of Ruckert's life since he had left them, and Margaret and he looked with pleasure on the likenesses of the dear father and mother they had left in the happy home so faithfully portrayed. While the pictures were fading the fairies vanished, after leaving costly gifts for the bride and bridegroom, and for Hans Kreppe and his wife.

"Adieu!" they sang as they departed; "at Midsummer we will come again."

The purse left with Hans Kreppe proved of great use and enjoyment, not only to himself, but to many another.

"I cannot use such wealth for myself alone," he said. "Tell me, Ruckert, of some one for whom I may use it."

Ruckert and Margaret knew of many struggling people in the great world, whom they had helped, and whom they now felt Hans might still more benefit.

"I have it," said Hans, as they talked together. "I will form a colony here. These wide tracts of uninhabited and fertile land *shall blossom into gardens. My poor little house and barn shall have company now, and not stand so forlornly alone.*"

"A capital thought," said Ruckert; "and Margaret and I will have a house of our own here, and live here half the year and help you in your colony; the other half, we will live with our other parents in the great world."

This arrangement proved agreeable to all. The winter months Margaret and Ruckert spent in social life in the great world. Spring-time and harvest they dwelt and labored in the colony that grew and thrived as colony was never known to thrive before.

Whenever the beautiful moon hung *crescent-like in the heavens*, Dame Kreppe, looking at it over her right shoulder, thanked the fairies for their goodness, and thought of the Fairy Luna as she sailed down to her that night so long ago.

"You think there is good luck in gazing so, over your shoulder, at that moon," said Hans Kreppe, good-naturedly; and gazing over his own at the pretty villas and their garden plots, and the cultivated fields that lay about them, he thought that *there was good luck also.*

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## FAITH WILD'S BONDAGE.

BY FRANK H. ANGIER.

FAITH WILD had been to the city; and to say this of an unsophisticated country girl, who had never before been a dozen miles from the paternal roof, means a great deal. To Faith the assertion imported not only that she had looked upon the roofs of the metropolis, from the windows of the State House lantern, and beheld its imposing aggregate of domes and spires from the railing of Cambridge bridge, but also that she was no longer the simple-minded Faith who had left Willowville for Boston three months ago.

When Abner Markham helped her into the stage-coach, on the day of her departure, and, with a sinking heart, waved her a sad goodbye as the conveyance vanished down the road in a cloud of dust, he bade farewell forever to the girlish, open-hearted Faith Wild, whose image had grown into his heart. It was another woman who came back to him three months afterward. Not that Faith had learned, in this short interval, to despise the little village wherein she had been born and bred, or to look with disdain upon the simple rustic youths and maidens who had been her companions from childhood. She was too true-hearted and sincere a girl to assume any attributes which did not properly belong to her, and not even the most envious of her Willowville friends ever thought to accuse her of "putting on airs." But her visit to the city had been Faith Wild's Rubicon. The experience had widened her conception of life, and had built up an intangible barrier between her and her old associates. She had grown out of their humble sphere, and although there was nothing of scornful pride nor any assumption of superiority in her intercourse with them, a host of new desires and ambitions had been born in Faith's bosom, which made her heart ache, with a pain it had never known before, when she thought how very hopeless these ambitions were.

Thus Faith Wild's visit to the city had to her a grave meaning. If she had never gone, she would have been quite content to marry Abner Markham and to settle down into a quiet, domestic, homespun life at Willowville, without once dreaming of what she had

learned in metropolitan company—that she was remarkably smart and pretty, and capable of improving much better opportunities than Willowville was ever likely to offer her. Of course this new knowledge of herself brought its pain as well as pleasure. With the first thrill of delight at finding her own charms attractive to city eyes, came a humiliating recollection of her own deficiencies in education and accomplishments, a recollection which made her half miserable with vexation.

"But I can improve in these things," thought Faith; "and I shall never accomplish anything whatever in life, if I marry Abner Markham."

And one afternoon she told him so.

"I thought you would marry me, Faith," said Abner, digging his knife savagely into the log on which they were sitting. "I always expected it. I suppose I was a fool for thinking so, but you led me yourself to believe it, although I had never asked you."

"I wish you had not asked me now," said Faith, looking at him kindly from her bright, blue eyes. "O Abner! we have been friends together since we were little children. Why can't we be the same to each other still?"

"Because we can't, Faith," he replied. "I have loved you all my life, and I shall love you until I die. If I had told you this before you went to the city you would have taken me, and you know it."

"Yes," said Faith, "I should; and I rejoice for your own sake, Abner, that you did not tell me then, for since I came back I seem to have come into another world. All my life is changed to me. I should only have made you miserable, if I had married you, feeling so. Don't think, Abner, that I have learned to despise you and my old friends here in Willowville. It is not that, indeed."

"I understand," he said. "Since you saw something of the world, you have found that we are not the only people in it. I don't blame you—only if it had been I who had gone to the city, no length of time would have changed my feelings toward you."

Faith bit her lip and tapped her little foot impatiently on the grass.

"If I don't love you," she said, "I can't help it. Let us talk of something else."

"The time will come," said Abner, vehemently, "when you shall be my wife, Faith. Some day you will believe me worthy of you. I shall never be as good as you, but you will find that I am capable of better things than you have ever seen me do."

"We cannot tell what changes time may bring," replied Faith, smiling. "I give you no hope, Abner. I am going up the mountain a little way, after some berries for tea. Will you go too?"

"No," he replied. "I want to sit here for a while and think this over."

"Good-by, then," said Faith, placing her hand on his shoulder as she rose. "Don't think hard of me. You will see, some day, that it was all for the best."

She waved her hand to him and tripped lightly away among the trees, taking with her, as it seemed to Abner, all the sunshine from the spot where she had been sitting, and all the fragrance from the wild flowers that grew around it. As she reached a turn in the road she paused a moment to look back, and as her eyes fell upon Abner Markham, still digging his knife spitefully into the old log, a shade of something like regret came over Faith's heart and stung her with a slight spasm of remorse.

"It is too bad," she said to herself. "I almost wish I had never gone away. I believe he loves me, and I am sorry for him. Poor Abner!"

She turned away along the path that led up the side of the gray old mountain which overshadowed Willowville, and tried to dismiss the matter from her mind entirely. But as she passed leisurely onward, looking on either hand for berries, the briars became entangled in her dress so provokingly, and her foot slipped upon the stones so many times, that she could hardly help thinking that Abner's assistance would be very acceptable, and wondering why he had refused to come with her. She was not quite sure that she had done right in treating him thus. Abner Markham was the finest young fellow in Willowville, and the little circle of her acquaintance was not likely to offer so many chances that she could afford to throw them away without serious deliberation. But Faith had set her heart on higher things.

"I don't care," she said, shutting her teeth determinedly together. "I'll do better than that, or die an old maid. See if I don't."

The berries were scarce, and Faith unconsciously wandered from the path, in her search, and had climbed half way up the mountain side before she became aware of her whereabouts. She had no fear of getting lost, for the trees that found a foothold among the rocks were so few and scattered that she could always have a fair view of the country below, and as for the terrible tales which she had heard of these stony ledges, she believed them too little to feel any cause for alarm.

And so Faith wandered on, heedless of her footsteps, and had barely filled her basket as she reached the "shoulder" of the mountain, a ledge of rough, precipitous rocks which overhung the spot whereon she stood. The sun was sinking slowly in the west, and the whole earth below was brightened by the level bars of gold which came slanting across the landscape. Willowville, almost at Faith's feet, lay sleeping peacefully in the evening light, and the smoke from a hundred scattered farmhouses in the valley curled gently upward in the clear, still air. So lovely was the picture beneath her that Faith stopped still in admiration. A chord within her nature, ever susceptible to an appeal from the beautiful, thrilled at the splendor of the scene before her. But as she remained thus, lost in contemplation of the view, Faith became vaguely conscious of some disturbing influence breaking in upon her reverie. It seemed to her that some one or something was watching her, and she cast her eyes around involuntarily to see who or what it was. She glanced behind her and saw nothing. She turned to look toward the top of the ledge above her, but there was no one there. Her eyes dropped to the ground again and fell upon a coiled and shining reptile which had disposed itself in graceful folds almost at her feet.

Faith had usually a shuddering fear of snakes, but there was something in the position of this monster that aroused in her a strange curiosity. Instead of running away, she stood still and waited for it to move. There was something so horribly beautiful in the arrangement of its coils and in the contour of its glistening head, as it was raised motionless in the air, that Faith felt a curious attraction toward it. So still did the reptile remain, that she, after a while, began to doubt whether it were a snake at all, and questioned whether she had not been deceived. Perhaps her eyes had misled her, or mayhap it was only the ghost of a snake, the

spirit of some one of the old *crotali* with which tradition infested the mountain. And then, carrying her fancy still further, she queried whether it were not the Genius of the mountain himself, who had assumed this form to terrify her into retracing her steps. What if there were treasures in the hill behind these rocks which it was the duty of this beautiful monster to guard?

And as Faith thought of these things, and amused herself with such idle fancies, the glittering black eyes of the creature seemed to enlarge, and from their depths to send forth coruscations of fire. She scarcely noticed the phenomenon as unusual, so busy was her mind with the dreamy musings which this thing at her feet had suggested. The air around her became filled with a confused, golden light, from the midst of which the terribly black eyes, each moment growing larger and wider, were fixed upon her with a fierce intensity. A rich voluptuous languor stole over her frame, and a sweet, drowsy hum, like the droning of bees among the clover blossoms, sounded vaguely in her ears. A dim consciousness came over her that in some way she was being drawn under the influence of a fearful spell, but the brilliant glare of the horribly beautiful eyes bound her to the spot, and she could not have moved for her life.

What followed within the next five minutes Faith Wild never knew. The whole earth seemed to dissolve around her and to melt into thin air. The sun was blotted out. And then she felt three cruel blows that stunned her into unconsciousness, and she sank fainting to the ground.

"Faith! Faith! Don't you know me? Dear Faith! look at me."

It was Abner who spoke, and it was Abner's arms which were clasped so tightly around her. Faith opened her eyes languidly, and shudderingly closed them again.

"Speak to me, Faith!"

She started up with a convulsive cry. "Where am I?" she asked.

"On Bald Mountain," said Abner, smiling to reassure her, "right in the middle of rattlesnakes. Not a very safe place for either of us, and we will get out of it as soon as you feel able to walk."

"What has happened?" she asked, still bewildered. "You struck me," she cried, shrinking from him, as a confused remembrance of what had occurred came back to her. "Why did you do that?"

"I?" said Abner, in astonishment. "I struck you? Faith, you are dreaming."

"Yes, you struck me thrice across my shoulders, and I fell. You nearly killed me."

"No," said Abner, amazed at her singular words; "this is what I struck, and three blows did the business for him. In a moment more I should have been too late. Look here!"

He thrust his cane into the bushes and drew out the flaccid body of a huge *crotalus*, so horrible in its scaly convolutions that Faith drew back with a shudder.

"Five rattles," observed Abner, swinging the creature through the air upon the end of his stick and casting it away from him down the mountain. It was a lucky escape."

"You have saved my life," said Faith, resting her head upon his shoulder. "I thank you, Abner. I shall never forget it."

"And you thought I struck you," said Abner, reproachfully.

"Every blow which you gave that monster I felt, too," replied Faith. "I suppose that accounts for it. Let us leave this dreadful place. I will lean upon your arm if you will let me."

As they descended the mountain, Abner carrying Faith's basket in one hand and assisting her tottering footsteps with the other, the young man pondered deeply upon what Faith had said. If it was true that she had felt the strokes inflicted upon the serpent, did it argue that the reptile had for the moment made her a part of itself? Or was the solution of the mystery to be found in the fact that Faith possessed a singular degree of sensibility, which, in the tensely drawn condition of her nerves, had assumed to itself the pain wrought upon another creature? Or did Abner himself possess that power which had, without his knowledge, brought Faith within its influence, and led him unconsciously to transfer to her a reflex of the blows which had broken the back of the enemy?

Abner was no metaphysician, but he had heard of animal magnetism, and had seen one of his own acquaintances "mesmerized" by a popular lecturer who had once visited Willowville. Whether Faith's curious experience had anything in common with the extraordinary statements which the lecturer had given as facts, he could not tell, but a secret wonder came across his mind whether he himself did not possess some such gift as that exercised by the mesmerist, and whether he could not command the wills and move-

ments of others, as he had heard that some men could do.

The matter puzzled his brain for days afterwards, until, in despair of coming to any lucid conclusion, he rejected the entire idea as ridiculous. Nevertheless, before a week had elapsed, an opportunity presented itself to settle his doubts and to furnish a definite answer to the questions which filled his mind.

One lazy afternoon, as he was hay-making in his father's meadow, he caught sight of Faith Wild's trim little figure passing down the lane full half a mile away. It was past four o'clock, and he knew that she was going to the "Corners" post-office for letters. An irresistible impulse to put at rest his own uncertainty as to his influence over this girl, led him to hide himself behind a tree and to bid her come to him. From his place of concealment he watched her as she came opposite the barway which led into the meadow. He saw her stop and hesitate, in apparent indecision, then she advanced a step and halted again. Finally she turned towards the meadow, let down the bars, and came slowly towards Abner. Thus far his experiment had been successful, and filled with a wild excitement at his unexpected victory, he bent the full energies of his will to drive her back again. She had advanced nearly half way to him, before she stopped once more. Then she turned quickly around and rapidly retraced her steps to the road.

This test, though it would scarcely have convinced a skeptical mind, was perfectly satisfactory to Abner Markham. From that hour he knew that he held Faith Wild's destiny in the hollow of his hand. To her his will was a law to which she was bound in passive obedience. And, as the days passed on, he found ample opportunity to verify this conclusion. Exulting in the discovery of his power, he used it upon every occasion which gave him a chance to exercise it. He called Faith to him from across the fields where no echo of his voice could reach her. He extended his control to the minor details of her life, and fastened upon her the iron chains of a bondage such as few women ever know. It was a sweet revenge for the slight which he felt she had put upon him, although he could not but himself acknowledge how dangerous a power it was which he possessed. In tampering thus with the main springs of Faith's life, he knew that he was playing with fire. Yet he had no conception of his own

meanness, or thought of that other danger—to him the most dreaded of all calamities—that even Faith's kindly feeling towards him might be changed to hate, when she came to realize her position, and that, like a hunted tigress, she might some day turn and rend him. Abner loved Faith Wild with all his soul. He would have laid down his life at her request, but there was an exultant delight in this ability to sway the heart, the passions, the very life of a young and lovely girl, which formed a temptation too brilliant for a man like Abner Markham to resist.

And poor Faith, at first dimly conscious of all this, at last came to know her enchanter and to realize how terrible was the spell in which he held her. The serpent upon the mountain had not had for her a more fearful fascination than this man had unaccountably acquired. She learned to shrink from him, in a vague, wild terror when she met him, and yet was drawn to him by a subtle attraction to which she was powerless to offer resistance. And it was not only in his presence that she felt the magician's spell. His influence extended to the most private relations of her life. It caused her to do those things against which her whole nature revolted. It pressed upon her soul like some terrible weight, which was crushing her existence into a shapeless mass of contradictions and anomalies.

"Abner! Abner!" she cried, when one day an irresistible impulse to seek him had led her to him at his work, "have you no mercy for me?"

"Mercy?" repeated Abner. "What do you mean, Faith?"

"What charm have you thrown around me, that I feel no longer myself?" said Faith. "You bid me come to you, and I come. You have bewitched me, and you know it."

A faint smile of triumph stole over Abner's features, and he leaned upon his rake to look at her more closely.

"So you acknowledge my power," he said. "It is true, Faith. Do you remember what I told you, weeks ago?"

"You will never bring me to it thus," replied Faith. "You may make me your slave, but you will make me hate you. You have been to me a valued friend, Abner, since we were children together. I don't know what you have done to me. I don't know what strange power you have acquired, but my will is no longer my own. Some spell has been

cast upon me, and I know that it is you who are my master. Abner, if you would not have me your enemy, release me."

"Faith," he said, fixing his eye steadily upon her, "I would not for the world cause you a moment's pain in a matter less dear to my heart. I will release you on one condition. Love me."

She threw her arms about his neck with a despairing cry.

"I love you," she said, "and I hate you. If I become your wife, my love shall be the love of a serpent. I warn you of your own danger. Now let me go."

Abner looked down into Faith's face, as it lay upon his breast, and marked how pale it was. He sadly unclasped her white arms from about his neck, and held both her hands in his, while into his own countenance there came a look which betokened a mental struggle beneath the surface, most terrible in its intensity. If he resigned his claim upon her now, his power was gone forever. Hitherto he had looked only upon his own side of the problem, and at this moment a sense of his own selfishness came upon his inward vision and proceeded to do pitched battle with his love for Faith. At this very instant he possessed her. Did he love her well enough to lose her of his own volition? Could he drive her from him, for her own sake, and so stifle forever, with his own hand, the hope which still filled his heart? These were the questions which racked his brain as he looked down into Faith's beseeching eyes, and in them read his answer. It was love that conquered.

"Go, Faith!" he said. "You shall be free henceforth. Dear as you are to me, I will win you fairly or not at all."

Did Abner Markham guess, as the blue eyes were turned to him in gratitude, that Faith was half won already?

Faith herself did not dream of such a thing, but she went home and sat down to think it over and to surprise herself in making excuses for Abner. Had she possessed this wondrous strength of will, would she have used it less cruelly than he? she wondered. She doubted it. If his love for her was really such as to cause him to renounce its very object, rather than by ignoble means to gain the end he sought, was not the love of such man a pearl of too great price to relinquish hastily? She hardly knew. He was not her ideal hero, but she half-questioned whether, for that reason, he were any less heroic.

She might have ended in marrying him, after all, were it not that at this most critical juncture of Abner's destiny there appeared upon the scene a new actor, in the shape of one of Faith's metropolitan admirers, who came, as he elegantly but not very lucidly expressed it, "to visit the humming-bird in her native wilds," meaning, perhaps, that he came to see how Faith looked at home. Jack Ellersly was a formidable rival to Abner. He could make French quotations glibly, read poetic extracts neatly, and the fact that he came from the city covered up whatever mental or moral deficiencies he possessed, and enthroned him as a prime favorite among the Willowville girls. With Jack's advent the green-eyed monster made sad havoc among the rustic gallants of the village, but Ellersly had no intention of meddling in their affairs. It was Faith who had enchained him, and it was Faith whom he had journeyed all this distance to woo.

And silly little Faith, who would have accepted Jack without question before her adventure upon the mountain, now trembles with apprehension lest he should ask her to marry him. She was pleased with the attention, but she was not ready to commit herself beyond recall as yet. She could look across the pew in church and see Abner's weary face watching herself and Jack with a look of pain so keen that her heart would be filled with pity for him. She could see him stop his work to gaze after her as she passed down the road, with Ellersly holding her basket or her parasol, or helping her through the bars, or bestowing upon her a thousand of those little attentions which he knew so well how to use with advantage, and of which Abner understood nothing. And Faith appreciated the sacrifice, and knew that, though Abner suffered in silence, he suffered none the less acutely.

One Sunday evening, when it seemed to Abner that matters between Ellersly and Faith must be approaching a crisis, he stood upon the steps of the village church waiting for them to come out. A new look in Ellersly's eyes, as he stood for a moment in the light which streamed from the doorway out into the night, crushed whatever lingering hope there still remained in Abner's heart. It was a look of conscious triumph—of a certainty of victory—a look which to Abner was a deathblow to all his chance of winning Faith forever. He leaned against the churchyard fence, among the shadows, and

wrung his hands hard together. With one word he knew that he could wrest the prize from this man's grasp even now. A slight exercise of the boundless power which he possessed over Faith's whole being would give her to him for life. Should the word be spoken? Could he stand despairingly by and let the woman, who was to him as his very life, be taken from his bosom without lifting a hand in defence of his own great love for her? No, no! Back through the long years which they had passed together since the golden days of childhood, back over the dark waters of Time, which had parted him from the sunny shores which her presence made glorious, his heart called to her with a despairing cry. Not yet! not yet! He could not throw himself upon a sword, even though Faith's hand held it, and the words which, in the anguish of his heart, he had spoken to himself, found utterance on his lips. He fixed his eye upon her and called to her softly from out of the darkness:

"Faith! Come to me!"

He knew that she could not see him, but he saw her leave Ellersly's side and step hesitatingly towards him. And as Abner stood quietly awaiting her approach, he held with one hand tightly to the pickets of the fence, and with the other beckoned to her. With uncertain step she came across the churchyard, peering anxiously into the darkness.

"Abner! It is you. Where are you?"

The opening of a window-blind in the church let loose a stream of light across the churchyard, reaching, in a narrow, luminous lane, to where Abner stood. As she slowly advanced towards him, down this narrow path between the tombstones, she seemed to Abner as a spirit from another world, surrounded by the radiant halo of her own celestial glory. But her features wore a look so sad and reproachful that Abner's beckoning hand fell powerless at his side.

"No, no, Faith," he cried. "Go back, go back. I have not kept my word. I am not worthy of you. My heart may break, but you shall be spared."

"Abner!"

"He loves you," said Abner, waving her back from him with both hands. "See! Ellersly is waiting for you. He, at least, has won you honorably."

He moved slowly away among the graves, while Faith stood where she had first halted, at the end of the radiant lane whose golden walls commenced at the window of the church.

"Farewell, Faith!"

Poor Faith Wild's heart came up to her throat in a convulsive gasp. There was something more than heroic in this man, who could thus, through love, resign a victory that was already his own, rather than gain the battle with dishonor. At that moment there came to her a consciousness which made her whole frame tremble and her heart turn cold as ice—a consciousness that if Abner Markham went out from her presence now, all life would be to her but as a living death. Back to her from the outer darkness came his voice, calling softly in tones which trembled with the sadness of a last farewell. He was leaving her and she felt that it was forever.

"Abner! Abner!"

He stopped and partly turned towards her. She came slowly to him and twined her arms about his neck.

"The victory is yours," she whispered. "I rebel no more."

With a strange light glittering in his eyes, he placed his hands upon her shoulders and held her from him.

"Let me understand you," he said, quickly.

"Is this because you pity me?"

She looked into his face and smiled upon him through her tears.

"I have loved you all my life," she said.





## FIVE DAYS ON THE FARALLONES.

## A CALIFORNIA SKETCH.

BY J. S. BACON.

It was the spring of the year 1851. The good ship "Bazaar," lumber-laden, was lying quietly at anchor in the port of San Francisco. An over-stocked market had determined her captain and owners to wait for better times, and the days dragged wearily along.

Evening usually found a jolly party from the shore, around the whist table in the cabin, and it was at one of these social gatherings that a trip to the Farallones, that then "terra incognita," was proposed, and at once determined upon.

The little sloop Sarah, of perhaps ten or twelve tons burthen, a small craft that was plying on the river route to Sacramento, was chartered for the purpose, and the expedition prepared.

The cook of the ship, supplied with the necessary cooking utensils, was installed on board the sloop, to preside over the culinary department; the jolly captain of the old Bazaar took the helm, and one fine afternoon we got underway for sea, provided with a whaleboat for landing, and the usual assortment of shot guns, rifles, fishing-lines, etc.

We beat down the harbor, and the strong ebb tide swept us out through the Golden Gate, the high cliff of the North Heads "close aboard," but not then crowned with the white tower and light.

A light southwest breeze fanned us along quietly, and as it was my first watch on deck, I took the helm with something of the pride an "old salt" would feel; while our good captain descended to his berth, desiring to be called if there was any change.

As I stood in my position of trust and responsibility, the wind light, the rippling of the waves against our bluff bows soon lulled me into a sort of forgetfulness, and I sank into a reverie, only to be recalled to a sense of my responsibility by the flapping of the mainsail, and the "coming to" of the sloop, with a motion that aroused the sleepers in the cabin. In my carelessness I had "got her aback," the "watch below" was called up, and after a few nautical manœuvres, she was got upon her course again. But alas, for my heedlessness, I was in disgrace, and

another "hand" was ordered to "relieve the wheel."

The Farallones are situated some thirty miles from the San Francisco Head, and with the light wind prevailing we should hardly reach the island before daylight. The night passed quietly and without incident; the head wind obliged us to tack occasionally, and we beat down to the island, taking "a long leg and a short one," till just before the break of day we ran in under the dark overhanging cliffs of the largest of the three islands, and came to anchor near the shore. As morning dawned the sight that greeted our eyes was one we shall not soon forget. Millions of sea birds were wheeling about us, and screaming in our ears, and the heavy surf beat upon the rocky shore with a sullen roar.

This barren island rock was the home of the sea gull and other birds, a spot then seldom visited by men; far upon the ocean's bosom, and out of sight even of the shores we had left, unless in a clear atmosphere.

The sea was comparatively calm around us, although never at rest, as we lay in a secure cove, considerably protected from the long heavy swell of the ocean. As the day dawned the whaleboat was hauled alongside, and we prepared to land, first bestowing in our boat our pots and kettles, and all needed articles. The sloop, securely moored, was left to care for herself, while all hands started to explore this strange spot.

As we neared the shore, intending to land on an inviting looking beach, the birds seemed determined to dispute our every step, and we were obliged to fight them off with the oars. A landing at last effected, we next looked for lodgings, and soon found a spacious cave filled in with dry sea weed, and proceeded to take possession, christening our quarters as the "Bazaar Hotel." The scene from the door of the hotel was strange indeed. A considerable track of broad flat land extended from the foot of the high rugged hills of the island, in gentle slope to an inlet of the sea; its borders skirted with black jagged rocks, around and over which the ocean surged with ceaseless play. Across the inlet spoken of,

rose again abruptly high mountain peaks, whose rugged sides might defy the most daring of climbers.

*In front*, a majestic cone-shaped mountain towered far above the surrounding peaks, and it is upon this that the lighthouse of to-day with its revolving light has been placed. In approaching the Farallones from the sea, this high mountain peak is first discerned, rising so abruptly and to so great an altitude, that the island is visible from a long distance. To our eyes at this time, the only inhabitants of this strange spot were the birds, and they kept up such a clamor that all sense of loneliness was completely dispelled. They seemed to arrive from sea in the early morning, in great numbers, neither did our presence seem to intimidate them. It was the season of incubation, and as the morning advanced the crowds grew thicker, till they seemed millions in number, and the rocky sides of the mountains dotted thick with birds upon their nests.

The upper portions of the mountain were first sought, the birds alighting lower down its steep sides, only when unable to find a lodgement above. During our tarry of five days upon the island, our nights were spent in comparative quiet, as far as the birds were concerned. Nothing but the regular wash of the billows, as they trembled upon the rocks or sandy beach, intermingled with the barking of the sea-lion, disturbed the silence; but as the first streaks of day appeared in the east, our winged visitors began to arrive, the noise and confusion increasing, as the day dawned full upon us.

There seemed to be, however, but a few varieties of birds, principally the Muhr, the Sea Parrot and the Sea-Gull. The Muhr, a species of duck, which were the most numerous, lay their eggs upon the bare rocks, seeking only a lodgement, and with no attempt at nest building; they monopolized the lofty crags, and were so numerous that they seemed to hide the rocks themselves from view; they sit erect, and their white breasts presented a very singular appearance as they sat, literally covering the rising peaks from their very summits far down the sloping sides. The Sea Parrot, so called from its parrot head and beak, and its peculiar plumage, builds its nest in deep holes burrowed in the sides of some sandy cliff, and reaching beyond the length of the arm, as we proved for ourselves. They had perforated innumerable holes in the abrupt sides of the cliffs, and here and

there could be seen a beautiful white tufted head peeping from its hiding-place, from their very position for the most part wholly secure from intrusion; only in a few of the more accessible spots were we able to explore their retreats; but were generally unsuccessful in driving them out, as their beak proved too formidable a weapon to encounter with the naked hand. The Sea-Gull lays its eggs upon the sandy plain, never on the hillsides, and the broad flat in front of us was covered thick with the birds upon the nest, their male attendants standing quietly by, or hovering in the air, indulging in mingled screams, as they witnessed the preparations making for the daily raid, as it proved, upon their happy households.

"Farallone Eggs" had just been introduced into the San Francisco market, bringing readily one dollar and one dollar and a half per dozen, and we immediately bethought ourselves to take a cargo of this new commodity back to the city with us. Pails and baskets were sought for among our stores, and after a wholesome out-of-door breakfast, prepared by our cook, we made ready to sally forth "a eggging," as one of our party termed it.

As we stood watching the bird scene around us, a party of men approached from behind a neighboring hillock; we had supposed ourselves the only human beings upon the island, as no boats or vessel of any description were to be seen at our anchorage. Their appearance was so sudden they seemed to have dropped from the clouds. This party proved to be egg hunters from the city. They had already sent one or two shipments of eggs to San Francisco, which were turned to profitable account. In order to make sure of obtaining eggs that were fresh laid, these gatherers, on their first arrival at the island, had invaded those localities where the birds were the most numerous, and robbed every nest, first driving off the birds and then destroying the eggs. These eggs thus destroyed were replaced in a day or two with fresh laid eggs, and in this way they made sure of their good quality. Day after day they had extended their operations to other localities, so that when we arrived the field had been pretty thoroughly explored, and all eggs within reach sure to be fresh eggs. Many places, however, were wholly inaccessible to mankind, and here the sober-looking Muhrs would sit quietly looking down upon the destruction going on among their neighbors.

These "egg gatherers" from the city, who were pursuing the business for a livelihood, had called to urge an agreement upon us, not to start on our egg hunt till eleven o'clock. The birds, they informed us, laid their eggs in the morning and before eleven o'clock, prior to which time, it was not best to disturb them. The terms of agreement fixed, the party retired, and we waited watch in hand for eleven o'clock to come, each one provided with his basket or pail. The signal given, we started; some climbed to the highest peaks, while many gathered liberally from the gull-nests on the plains below. The birds had to be literally driven from their nests; they would remain till you could almost lay hands upon them; until after a little, many having been driven off, the panic became universal, and they started in countless numbers.

The Muhr cannot rise at once from the ground, but launch forth, as it were, from some eminence, till their wings can bear them up; this is the reason they select the mountain sides for their nests; they rise from the water, after a little active paddling, and in a calm day even this appears difficult; they rise from elevated ground, only after a tumble of many feet downward.

As I crawled up the jagged cliff, gathering eggs as I went, parties above me had disturbed the birds, and such was the downward rush, that I was forced to crouch upon the ground, and protect my head as best I could, from the blows that came thick and fast, occasioned by the falling headlong of the frightful birds from the rocks above, seeking opportunity to use their wings. It seemed as if they would never pass by, and my head and body were beaten almost to a jelly by the thumps received.

One unexpected difficulty we had to contend with was fighting the sea-gulls; they swarmed and screamed about us, intent on devouring the eggs, which they could not reach till we had disturbed the hapless Muhrs; then swooping down they would seize the eggs in their claws, and rising again, let them fall upon the rocks beneath, and then devour them with avidity. So active were these pests, that they would gather two eggs to every one we obtained. The sea-gulls offered no resistance to the invasion upon their premises, but upon near approach would quit their position with an agonized scream, leaving their two brown mottled eggs an easy prey.

The shell of the gull's egg is very delicate, as much so as a hen's egg, while the eggs of the Muhr are tough and not easily broken. A wise provision of nature, for they are often doubtless subjected to rather rough treatment among the birds themselves, and if easily broken would not endure much jostling in a nest that has no softer lining than the rock itself. The egg is of a beautiful green color, spotted with black, and with sharp pointed ends.

Egg-gathering from the Farallones has been going on with the return of every spring; and one would suppose that these annual inroads upon their chosen habitations would result in driving away the birds to quarters more secure from molestation. Such is undoubtedly the fact to a great extent; but yet at this day, eggs continue to be brought to market from thence, but the gathering is done in a more systematic manner, and the search extended to other parts of the island. At the time of our visit, our researches extended over a very limited extent of surface, and the quantity collected in our few days' tarry only proves how numerous were the birds. The birds once disturbed, took their departure, seldom returning again till the dawn of the succeeding day. Sunrise would usually find them as numerous as before, apparently in no way disheartened by their rough treatment.

After two hours of most laborious work we returned to camp, each armed with an egg load; some had previously brought in a well-filled basket, and gone forth a second time. The result of our egg hunt for that day counted out eighty-two dozen eggs, muhrs' and gulls' eggs combined. Tired with our efforts, we lay around the smoking saucepan filled with the delicacies of a San Francisco market of early times; among said delicacies were potatoes from Sandwich Islands, a rare treat in those days. I well remember a famous restaurant in San Francisco, located at the corner of Clay and Montgomery streets, where is now the banking-house of John Lime & Co., called, I think, the "Alhambra." A large card posted conspicuously informed the public of "*Potatoes every meal.*" The rush for potatoes then exceeded that for oysters of to-day, "only eight days from New York."

But to return. Dinner over, and our pipes and cigars duly considered, we concluded to spend the afternoon with the sea-lions, then lying in great numbers upon the rocks, skirting

the channel. Their barking, or deep-mouthed yelping, sounding more like a consumptive cough than anything else, mingled continually with the screaming of birds and the dull roar of the surf. All day and all night these sea-monsters kept up their incessant coughing, and it required a night or two spent on the island to become accustomed to their strange noise.

The sea-lions, lazy helpless creatures on land, lay basking in the sun, and allowed us to approach within perhaps twenty feet of them, before they beat a retreat; if annoyed and teased, they would make two or three clumsy springs towards us, not exceeding their own length, and then turn and make for the water. Once afloat in this element, they are as graceful in their movements as a fish.

Some of these monsters equalled any "Mammoth Dick" of an ox in size, and must have weighed upwards of three thousand pounds. Their head is the counterpart of that of the lion, or panther of the forest; and when aroused, they snarl and show their teeth in a similar manner. Their appearance is that of huge beasts sitting upon their haunches.

We amused ourselves with teasing these creatures, and laughing at their clumsy retreat to the sea. If by any chance we were able to get between them and the water their anxiety knew no bounds; writhing and snarling they would try to circumvent us, till at last one of their writhing leaps right towards us soon cleared a path. Their tough old carcasses resist missiles of almost every kind; we stood at a little distance, and one of our party threw a whale-lance with all the force he could give it, but it rebounded from the creature's sides as if they had been made of rubber.

Desirous of securing some trophies to carry back with us, we selected the largest old bull we could find, and sent a rifle bullet just under his fore shoulder. That "settled his case" without delay. I remember to have secured one of his whiskers, or whatever name you term it; it was in size nearly that of a goose quill at the larger end, and with a length of eighteen inches.

These sea-lions were an inexhaustible source of curiosity to us, and we spent much of our time among them, watching their movements. Upon a rocky eminence across the channel before spoken of, a great number of these creatures lay around, some of them having climbed up to its very top. A few

rifle bullets, sent in that direction, created a panic among them, causing them to throw themselves headlong into the sea, and striking the points of rocks in their descent would rebound from one to another till in a sea of foam they disappeared beneath the waves. In swimming only the head appears above water, representing an ugly vicious-looking monster, but perfectly at home in this element.

Each morning found us egg-hunting, for the birds robbed of their eggs, would lay again the following day. Each afternoon teasing the lions or exploring the island.

Observing on a small island near us, a large number of seals, we took our whaleboat one day to pay them a visit. As we approached the ledge of rocks we found it covered with the females and their pups or cubs. The gathered hundreds set up a terrible roar to intimidate us; old bull seals and sea-lions swarmed around our boat, diving underneath and coming up on all sides of us; snarling, roaring, spitting catlike, and showing ugly rows of teeth, and even seizing upon our oar blades; our position was by no means pleasant, and we feared lest some rude fellow might place his back under us and capsize the boat, or punch a hole big enough to keep us all bailing; we fired our shot guns, and endeavored in every way to keep them at bay till we could reach the rocks, which at last we succeeded in doing. The female seals clung to their young till the last moment; some coaxing them into the sea with them, and supporting them on their shoulders. On landing we found the sea-washed ledge literally strewn with young seals, varying in age from three or four days upwards.

They are beautiful creatures, mild-eyed, and innocent-looking, resembling young puppies; their fur sleek and shining, and the little innocents bleating like lambs. So beautiful now, it seemed incredible that they could ever grow into the hideous-looking monsters that filled the sea around us. The young seal does not take to the water naturally for some time after its birth; but if compelled, they are supported by the dam on her back or shoulders.

A short time sufficed us to stay here, the old ones male and female were becoming perfectly frantic, and the deep-mouthed roars of defiance seemed to gather strength with every moment's delay. We hastened to our boat and rowed rapidly away. A few old seals followed us, content, however, with making

hideous faces. I shall never forget that visit to the nursery of the sea-lion; it well repaid us for our labor, to say nothing of our scare.

There are, or were, but few flowers growing upon the island; it was spring time and the green grass was upon the hillsides, wherever a little soil had obtained a lodgement, but flowers were scarce. The sight of the island was that of barrenness and desolation, and its peculiar charm lay in its strange and wild appearance. Seldom visited by man, it was the fit nursery of the sea-birds, and sea-lions. We found no fresh water on the island, although it may be that springs do exist there. Our five days glided rapidly away, spent amid the wild scenes; our harder was bountifully supplied with fresh eggs, and we feasted on omelets, a little rank to the taste, but omelets nevertheless.

Some of our time was spent in fishing around the rocks that stood a little from the shore; in fact the water everywhere abounded in fish, principally of rock cod.

Once or twice each day we visited the sloop to see to her moorings and stow our cargo of eggs. We had accumulated in all two hundred and fifty dozen. After five days spent on this romantic spot we embarked for home. The morn of the sixth day found us once more at sea, and with a fine south-west breeze and a flowing sheet we laid our

course directly for the "Head," bound for "San Francisco and a market."

The breeze continued to freshen, and the good sloop, with a bone of enlarged size in her teeth, sped rapidly onward, soon leaving the islands *far alone* on the wide Pacific. A run of five hours brought us alongside of the old "Bazaar" once more, pleased beyond measure with our adventure. It took but a short time to finish the unloading of our cargo. Our "charter party" was duly cancelled, and the "Sarah" given up to her owners again, to ply upon her accustomed route. So ended our cruise. It might be interesting to the reader to know that we sold our eggs for one dollar per dozen, reaping profit enough on the sales to pay the charter of the sloop and expresses of every kind, and leaving a good balance as a present to our prince of cooks.

The Farallones of to-day are not the Farallones of 1850. A lighthouse has been placed upon one of the highest points of the island visited by us, and the island occupied, and partially cultivated, by the lighthouse-keeper's family and fishermen that supply the San Francisco market. Besides, a company styled the "Farallone Egg Company," now claim the right to collect the spring deposit of eggs, and altogether the place is so changed that we could not recognize it to-day as the scene of our picnic of 1850.

## FLIRTING WITH COUSIN JOHN.

BY CARRIE D. BEEBE.

My father loved the sea—it was his home. And when he married, he purchased and furnished to my mother's taste, the old house by the rocks that his vessel often passed, and there I was born.

The building was of brick, its walls cold and bare, for the winds that swept from the sea in winter, destroyed both shrubs and flowers. A few dwarfed cedars dotted the lawn, their branches bending back from the sea.

My mother died while on a voyage taken with the hope of restoring her waning health, and she sleeps beneath the waters of the southern sea. And when my childish heart refused to be comforted, because I sorely missed the gentle song that always before had lulled me to slumber in the pale evening light, my father whispered that my mother would still sing to me through the waves. I listened to their low, murmuring melody, my grief was soothed, and I slept.

My father took me home, and there I remained in charge of my mother's maid Janet, until I reached my thirteenth year, when I was sent to an excellent school.

At eighteen I graduated, and returned home, spending my time by the sea, or in the pleasant rooms that, through my father's indulgence, I was allowed to call my own. They had been my mother's, and though beautiful when she occupied them, yet each time my father returned he brought something new to beautify them. Books, paintings, statuary, dainty shells, rare flowers, birds, with shining plumes, and others with sweeter songs, a brilliant-toned piano, and a low-voiced harp, while the carpet, skillfully woven to represent the waves of the sea, sank beneath the lightest footfall, until I almost dreamed that I was treading on real waves, in some mermaid's ocean-bower.

An aunt of my father found me thus, and insisted upon my spending the winter with her in her city home, and as father gave his consent, I bade adieu to my home, and accompanied her on her return.

She was a childless widow, reported to be wealthy, and possessed a handsome house in a fashionable street. Her income, however, was not large, and it was by careful economy,

and judicious expenditure, that she maintained her place among the leaders of fashion.

She gave a party soon after my arrival. My dress was a white feathery lace, that looked like gauze with snow-flakes scattered over it. The sleeves were caught up with coral sprays, and I wore coral in my hair. I thoroughly enjoyed the evening. Everything was new to me, yet, strange to say, I felt perfectly at home, and being the latest novelty, I was petted and flattered to my heart's content.

Aunt Helen was more than pleased, and pronounced my advent a success.

"I am proud of you, Christie," she said; "you seemed to attract universal admiration, and I never saw Frank Wilton so perfectly devoted to any one before, and that is saying a great deal, for he is a notorious flirt. So guard your heart, my dear, until you are sure of his."

"Never fear for me, auntie. I do not intend to fall in love with Mr. Wilton."

"Don't misunderstand me, my dear. He is of a good family, wealthy, and very witty; in fact, an excellent match for any one."

I did not agree with Aunt Helen, but concluded to pursue the subject no further. He did possess a ready wit, which at first pleased me, but before the evening was over, I perceived that he had neither depth of mind nor force of character. He proved to be a most agreeable escort, however, whether at a ball, theatre, or in spending a social evening at home; being the life of the party, and untiring in devotion to me.

One evening, toward the close of the season, I was unusually tired, and begged Aunt Helen to excuse me from going out with her. After auntie had gone, I went into the library, and curled myself up in an armchair before the grate. Naturally, my thoughts turned to the party, and I wondered who was there, and if Frank would miss me.

The mantel clock struck eleven, I began to feel sleepy, and was about to retire, when some one entered the room, and Frank Wilton stood beside me.

"I was disappointed because you were not at the ball," said he, "and I came to ask permission to spend the evening with you here."

He took a seat, and sat abstractedly gazing into the fire. Then after a few attempts at conversation, he abruptly asked me to become his wife.

My conscience smote me. I did not love him, and could only refuse his offer in as delicate a manner as possible. "Do not blame me," I said, at the close.

"Why, Christie! are you sitting up for me?"

It was my Aunt Helen's voice. Quite bewildered, I started up. "Where is Frank?" I asked.

"He was at the ball, when I left; you have been asleep and dreaming, child!"

So I had! but I was wide awake now. Aunt Helen sat down. "Christie," she said, gravely, "I never asked your confidence before; but I would really like to know if you love Frank Wilton?"

"No, I do not. Why do you ask me?"

"There was a dashing belle from the West, at the ball, a Miss Kane, and Frank was all devotion, I assure you. It caused universal remark, and many wondered how he would act if you were there."

"The wretch!"

"Why, my dear, you just said you did not care for him."

"Neither do I, but one doesn't like to be snuffed out so coolly, after all, auntie."

"Very true. But what can we do?"

"I'm sure I don't know."

"Something must be done, that is certain. If you only had some 'gay gallant' to play off against Miss Kane, it would be just the thing. Cousin John might do, but he is rather old for you, and besides, he is so grave and dignified, I doubt if he ever flirted in his life."

"Who is Cousin John?"

"Didn't I tell you? I received a letter from him this afternoon, saying that he was coming down to the city on business, and would be here to-morrow."

"Aunt Helen, do tell me who he is? Is he a cousin of mine, too?"

"O no, he was my husband's favorite cousin. When his father was living, we used often to visit at his house. He was a farmer, in comfortable circumstances, and had a most amiable wife, and several children."

"Cousin John?"

"My dear, I was speaking of his father. John is a partner in a dry-goods firm in Nelson, a country town near the old homestead. His brothers and sisters are all married."

"Is he rich, auntie?"

"I think not."

"What is his last name—Smith?"

"It is St. George. I think, under the circumstances, we had better persuade him to remain, and escort us to the ball at Mrs. Graham's on Friday evening. He is an acquaintance of Mr. Graham's, I know. If he consents, all will be well, for he'll be polite to you, at least. But it is late, and we must retire, my dear."

How ridiculous! thought I. He is an old bachelor, poor, his name is John, he is grave and dignified—and I am to flirt with him! And I marched off to bed.

The next day was stormy, and I busied myself with practising on the piano and arranging music for binding. I had been down in the dining-room searching the closets for goodies, and I ran through the hall singing:

"I'm jilted, forsaken, outwitted;

Yet think not I'll whimper or brawl—

The lass is alone to be pitied

Who ne'er has been courted at all."

Just then Aunt Helen opened the parlor door, and I called out:

"Aunt Helen! it's nearly time for Uncle John's arrival, isn't it? I'm going up stairs to dress, for, as I am going to flirt with him, I shall want to appear my best. And I sincerely hope that he won't be troubled with the rheumatism, it would be so dreadfully inconvenient, if I should happen to want to dance with him."

I cast a sidelong glance at Aunt Helen, as I was rattling on and ascending the stairs at the same time. Her horrified look stopped me. I comprehended the situation—Cousin John was in the parlor!

I went to my room, hardly knowing whether to laugh or cry. "Poor old gentleman!" thought I, "how vexed he will be with me for my rudeness! I must apologize. 'Do please hurry, Janet, and brush my hair,'" said I, determined to get through the unpleasant affair as soon as possible.

I donned my plain black silk with a trailing skirt, and fastening a lace collar with a diamond brooch, I descended to the parlor.

I opened the door and looked around for Aunt Helen; she was not there, but a gentleman from the opposite apartment advanced to meet me. He was very tall, and would have been slender, but for an extraordinary breadth of shoulder, which, with a broad forehead, gave him a commanding air.

"This is Cousin Helen's niece, Miss Nain, I suppose," said he, extending his hand.

Of course I was completely taken by surprise, but I managed to give him my hand and murmur, "Mr. St. George." Then, my curiosity getting the better of my embarrassment, I looked into his face and saw that though his mouth was firm, his eyes were fairly dancing with laughter.

It might not have been ladylike, but I burst into a loud laugh, in which he joined.

"Pardon me," I said, "but I thought you were an old gentleman; I cannot tell how I imbibed the idea, unless it was because you are auntie's cousin."

"Why, Christie!" said Aunt Helen, who entered the room at that moment, "I am not surprised that you should think Cousin John rather ancient, when you never saw him before; but that you should consider me old completely astonishes me."

"O auntie, I did not mean that, but—"

Here I broke down, like a bashful school-boy, who, overawed by the gaze of his teacher, cannot recall a word of the lesson he has conned so carefully. Mr. St. George's eyes were looking me through and through, and I grew more confused every moment.

"Never mind, Christie dear," said Aunt Helen, "let us go down and discuss the question over our dinner."

During the evening, Mr. St. George asked me to play for him. I had spent much time in practice, and was considered a good performer, but to-night I stumbled over the most beautiful passages in a manner that was fearful to hear.

"Sing something, Christie," said Aunt Helen, "perhaps Mr. St. George will assist you. I know you used to sing, Cousin John."

"Yes," he replied, "years ago, when we were all home together, but I doubt if Miss Nain has ever heard the songs we used to sing."

He mentioned the names of several; with some of them I was familiar, and we sang them together, to Aunt Helen's delight. After this Mr. St. George read aloud at her request, as we were all seated around the centre-table. How cosy and homelike it seemed, and for the first time I wondered how I could have remained so long contented alone, almost, in the old house by the sea.

At the close of the evening, Mr. St. George engaged to accompany us to the opera on the following night. Business would occupy his time throughout the day, he said, but he

would return as early as possible. On the next evening, if it pleased us, he would escort us to the party, at Mrs. Graham's; he had come down to the city almost on purpose to attend it, as Mr. Graham and himself were warm friends.

I went up to my room, and took a survey of myself in the mirror. "You are looking well, to-night, Miss Nain," said I, "if you did play so dreadfully, and lose the use of your tongue every time you were expected to say something brilliant."

"Christie!" said Aunt Helen, putting her head inside the door.

"Come in, auntie!"

"I was thinking," said she, as she closed the door, "that we couldn't have planned anything better, if we had tried for a lifetime. If Cousin John is half as attentive at Mrs. Graham's as he was to-night, I shall have no reason to complain. He is very much pleased with you, I know."

"I don't see why he should be pleased with me, for I'm sure I was never so stupid before in all my life."

"I don't think so, dear, but good-night."

Next morning when I awoke, the sun was shining brightly. I looked at my watch, it was half past eight. Breakfast time, and Aunt Helen so punctual. I rang for Janet to help me, and asked why I had not been called; she said that auntie came into the room, but I was sleeping so soundly she did not waken me, as she thought I appeared feverish.

I dressed hastily, and went down. Aunt Helen was just showing Mr. St. George out the front door. He waited, hat in hand, as I slowly descended.

"Good-morning, Miss Nain!" he said.

"I was afraid you were sick, Christie," said Aunt Helen, "your cheeks were almost scarlet."

"Probably because I slept so soundly, auntie."

"No, I noticed they were unusually flushed all last evening."

I glanced toward Mr. St. George; his eyes were dancing again. What did Aunt Helen mean? If I had been her aunt instead of her niece, I should certainly have boxed her ears.

With a graceful bow, Mr. St. George left us. I went into the parlor and peeped through the curtains as he walked down the street. How tall he was, and yet so graceful!

It was late in the afternoon when he re-



turned. I waited a few moments before I went down. I opened the door softly; Aunt Helen and he were sitting in the back parlor, and as I entered, a remark of hers caused me to pause. She was giving Cousin John a detailed account of my flirtation with Frank Wilton and its result. Fortunately, neither of them noticed my entrance, and, closing the door noiselessly, I went to my room in a state of mind difficult to describe. Carefully locking the door, I threw myself upon the bed, preparatory to having an "awful cry." I was just about finishing, when the bell rang for dinner. There I was, with disordered hair, swollen eyelids and a red nose.

First, I thought I would send word that I had a headache. But Aunt Helen knew my head never did ache, and would insist that I was sick and must send for the doctor; so choosing the lesser evil, I hastily bathed my face, arranged my hair and went down.

Aunt Helen was so much occupied that she did not observe my flushed face, but Mr. St. George did. He quietly led the conversation on interesting topics, and his voice and manner, when he addressed me, were very gentle. This would have been grateful to me, if I had not thought he supposed I was grieving for Frank. "He pities me," I said, and feeling exceedingly mortified, I was more reserved than usual. Before I was aware of it, however, my vexation had vanished, and I went up stairs to dress for the opera.

Janet was there before me, and had already brought out a bright-hued silk, and my white astrachan sack. I was pleased with her selection, and thanked her, as she helped me dress. Dear, faithful girl, she had been a mother to me almost, always petting me when I was in trouble, which, to be sure, didn't often happen. Auntie soon made her appearance, and stepping into the carriage, we were whirled away, and in due time pleasantly seated listening to Miss Kellogg's delightful rendering of Violetta, in "*La Traviata*."

I was too much engaged with the music to look about me, until Aunt Helen spoke.

"Christie! everybody is out. Frank Wilton is here, with Miss Kane, in the box opposite."

True enough, there they were. Miss Kane was very large, very showy, and gayly attired. Frank looked like a Lilliputian beside her. And as I looked up to where Mr. St. George's eyes were smiling on me, I noted the difference between the two.

The next day was pleasant, and before dinner I rode out with Mr. St. George. "O Aunt Helen!" I cried, as the carriage stopped at the door, "what a handsome turnout. How can Cousin John afford so much style, when he is poor."

"He is not really poor, my dear, and I've no doubt he might have been rich, if he was at all miserly."

We had a delightful drive through the park. Mr. St. George displayed his skillful horsemanship, and I was not a little proud of him as we dashed along, meeting scores of acquaintances.

After dinner I turned my attention to my dress for the evening, which Janet had been arranging through the day. It was a rich, lustrous silk, from a Lyons loom, of that peculiar shade of purple which inclines to crimson in the evening, and with it I was to wear a white lace fichu, of delicate design and frostlike fineness. My jewels were rare amethysts in a setting of Etruscan gold, a necklace, bracelets and bandeau. Janet arranged my hair, calling upon Aunt Helen to witness the effect. It was "just the thing," they decided, at last, and auntie said it was "fortunate that crimps were fashionable, they were so becoming to me, especially with the bandeau."

If "gratified pride and vanity are the acme of woman's happiness," then that night must have been the most delightful one of my life. Mr. St. George, who was very attentive, created quite a sensation, though courted more by the gentlemen than the ladies. Miss Kane, the personification of good-nature, was there, and Frank, who watched me closely. Evidently I was a puzzle to him. He usually danced attendance to the latest belle, and when he dropped one for another, he expected the first to become entirely extinguished. In this, I had proved an exception, and he was at a loss to account for it.

"Such a complete triumph, I never saw before," said Aunt Helen, as we rode home. "Why, John, you were the lion of the evening, and the way in which you queened it over that horrid Miss Kane, Christie, was beautiful to see."

I was well pleased, but somehow, when Mr. St. George bade me good-night, I cared more for his look, and the pressure of his hand, than all the rest.

I felt a little sad the next morning, but well knew the reason why. Mr. St. George

was to leave next day, and I was not in the least like the lady who woke one morning to the fact that she had been in love with her next door neighbor for years and never dreamed of it before.

The afternoon was cloudy, and the twilight came early. We were all sitting quietly in the parlor, when Aunt Helen asked:

"John, didn't you play the piano once?"

"I learned the accompaniment to a song or two when I was a boy, and my sisters were taking lessons, but I never fancied seeing a gentleman play the piano unless he has a remarkable talent for it, and I have not touched the keys in years."

"Cannot you remember anything?" I asked.

"There is a simple song, a song of the sea, that perhaps I can remember," and he took his seat at the piano.

He touched a few chords—they sounded strangely familiar—sounded like a voice saying to me, in the only words of my mother that I remember, "Close your eyes, darling, and I'll sing for you." I closed my eyes—the angel of memory gently opened the gates of the past—I forgot the present, and entered. The days of my childhood came back to me—my mother was sitting in her favorite chair under the cedar-trees, I was in her arms, and she was singing the same dear old song. I remembered portions of the air only, and had never heard it except from her lips until now, for it was the same.

"What a beautiful little thing that is, John, sad and low, like the waves. But I believe it has put Christie to sleep."

I was glad it was in the twilight, for my eyes were filled with tears. "It has soothed me to sleep many times, Aunt Helen," I said, at last; "mother used to sing it in the old house by the sea, and I have never heard it since she died, until now."

There might have been the least possible quiver in my voice, for Mr. St. George rose quickly, and came and stood beside my chair. Laying his hand lightly upon my hair, he stooped and kissed my forehead, then turned slowly, and left the room.

I could feel no indignation because of the caress; he was no stranger, no impulsive boy, but a man of thirty-five, upright and honorable, as Aunt Helen well knew.

I think my eyes were a trifle humid, next morning, when he said good-by; and I believe he observed it, for he took my hand the second time, leaving a kiss on the finger-tips.

"I will return as early as possible," he said, as he left us.

On that very afternoon, father came to take me home. "I shall remain longer than usual," he said, "and of course I could not think of staying there without you, little puss."

I was overjoyed at seeing him, although I did not like the idea of going home so soon; but, concealing my reluctance, I packed up, hoping it would be for the best, and two days after, found myself in the old house by the sea. I was glad to be home again, to see my pets, to hear the sea, but its song failed to soothe me as before.

One day while in my room, father called me. "Come down, Christie! I have something for you." He handed me two letters, addressed to himself. "One is from your Aunt Helen, and the other from Mr. St. George, enclosing another for yourself."

I received them with a trembling hand, and took them to my room to read. Aunt Helen's extolled Mr. St. George to the skies, and finished by saying, that if papa and I were willing, they would be at our house on Thursday next, in the five P. M. train. I cannot tell what the other letters said, but they were manly, earnest and affectionate.

That evening father and I had a long conference, and on the following morning he despatched two letters, assuring the recipient of each a hearty welcome.

Thursday evening came, and father went to the depot in the carriage. I had been in a state of unrest throughout the day, and as twilight approached, the skies were so beautiful I threw a light shawl around me and went down to the sea-side.

The western clouds were golden, but the sky overhead was of a deep rose, that softly faded into gray in the east. The delicate rosy hue was reflected in the ocean, reflected everywhere, until it seemed as though air and sea and sky were inspirited with the delicate tint, and possessed a subtle, soothing power. The south wind was sweet scented and mild, and I drank in the glorious beauty of the scene as a sweet refreshing draught.

I was aroused by a footfall upon the path, a footstep that I knew, soon as it reached my ear. I turned, and met the eyes of him I had so lately learned to love the best on earth, gazing earnestly and lovingly upon me—for a moment only—then I was clasped to a warm heart, while his voice, full of tenderness, said:

"Christie! I cannot live without you."

## FOILING HIMSELF.

BY HARLAN E. WARD.

"HUMPH! The *fortune's* all I care about!"

"I'm sorry to hear it, Clarence, for Helen Rivers is a superb girl, and one well worthy of a better fate. If you should marry her you'd break her heart."

Clarence Leighton laughed.

"You grow enthusiastic!" he exclaimed. "To hear you, one would think you were in love with her yourself. *Superb!* that's rich."

A twinge of pain passed over Maurice Eldreth's face.

"Perhaps I am," he said. "At any rate, I mean to warn her of your intentions; not let her fall in such a snare unsuspectingly."

"She won't believe you."

"Perhaps she may not; but if I do my duty my conscience won't accuse me."

"Why don't you marry her yourself?" sneered Clarence.

"Because I'm poor as poverty. Were I her equal in wealth and social position, I would contest the field with you. As it now is, all I can do is to warn her against your machinations. Now, on your honor, do you love her, or do you not?"

"Phew! Love her? I'd love an iceberg just as quick!"

"And yet you'll marry her?"

"I will—she's got a pile of money."

The young man passed from view beyond the shrubbery, for they were walking in the garden, and shortly afterward a lady emerged from a little arbor near by where they were talking. Her face was flushed a painful crimson, and she was smiling bitterly.

"You'd 'love an iceberg just as quick,' would you?" she muttered, in an undertone. "Well, listeners never hear much good of themselves, I've heard it said, but I believe they sometimes hear no good of others either. 'A pile of money,' indeed! I've got my eyes now open, Mr. Clarence Leighton, and you will think the 'iceberg' came from Greenland by express, or I'm mistaken."

And saying this, she, too, passed on and disappeared from sight.

When Clarence Leighton next met her, she received him only with a chilling stare.

"O Miss Rivers—Helen!" he exclaimed, in great apparent, and not a little real dis-

tress, "how have I offended you? I know you are offended, and I pray that you will tell me."

"Offended!—no," she said. "But icebergs always are quite cold, you know."

Instead of being covered with confusion, he laughed merrily.

"Maurice said that he would break the match between us," he said, gayly. "The fact is, he's in love with you himself, and thinks if he can spoil my chances, he shall win you. I did not think, however, you would heed him."

"Then you are both my lovers?" she asked quietly, controlling her indignation.

"Yes—I suppose so."

"And does he love me truly, or is it the 'pile of money' he is after?"

"I will not ascribe such motives to him, as I perceive he has to me," said Clarence, with a great appearance of candor. "Frankly, then, I think he loves you."

"And I shall have to choose between you?" said Helen, musingly. "Well, I choose Maurice."

"Miss Rivers!" Clarence exclaimed, aghast.

"I mean it, Mr. Leighton. Putting you on equal footing—you are the wealthiest, I know, but love laughs at wealth as well as locksmiths—I like Maurice far the best."

"It is because he's poisoned your mind against me!" cried Clarence, turning pale as death. "O Helen! believe me when I say I love you madly, for all I may have said to him! Besides, I never said half what I fear he has reported to you," he added.

"He has not reported a word to me," was the crushing rejoinder. "I was in the little arbor in the garden, when you and he were talking, and I was forced to hear the conversation about myself. Of course, you will admit that I can trust my own ears, Leighton?"

But Clarence Leighton did not stop to make reply. He did not even wait to say farewell, but seizing his hat he disappeared, and hasn't since been heard from.

And Maurice, who luckily received a legacy from the traditional rich uncle, about that time, went in and won.